

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 21 June 2012

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PART I

FOR COMMENT & DECISION

NEIGHBOURHOODS & COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL 2012/13 WORK PROGRAMME

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 For the Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel to identify priorities and topics for its Work Programme for the 2012/13 municipal year.

2. Recommendations/Proposed Action

2.1 That the Panel:

- 1) identify the major issues it would like to cover in the 2012/13 municipal year; and
- 2) agree, where possible, timing for specific agenda items during the 2012/13 municipal year.

3. Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities

- **Housing**
- **Regeneration and Environment**
- **Safer Communities**

3.1 The Council's decision-making and the effective scrutiny of it underpins the delivery of all the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities. The Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel, along with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and other Scrutiny Panels combine to meet the local authorities statutory requirement to provide public transparency and accountability, ensuring the best outcomes for the residents of Slough.

3.2 In particular, the NCS Panel specifically takes responsibility for ensuring transparency and accountability for Council services relating to housing, regeneration and environment, and safer communities.

4. **Supporting Information**

4.1 The purpose of Overview and Scrutiny is to hold those that make decisions to account and help Slough's residents by suggesting improvements that the Council or its partners could make.

4.2 Prioritising issues is difficult. The Scrutiny function has limited support resources, and therefore it is important that the work Scrutiny chooses to do adds value.

4.3 There are three key elements that make up the responsibilities of the Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel relating to the Cabinet Portfolios for Neighbourhoods and Renewal, Community and Leisure, and Environment and Open Spaces:

- provide transparency and public accountability for key documents;
- scrutinise significant proposals which are scheduled for, or have been taken as, a Cabinet/Officer delegated decision; and
- strategic shaping of service improvements.

4.4 In considering what the Panel would look at under points two and three above, members are invited to consider the following questions:

- *To what extent does this issue impact on the lives of Slough's residents?*
- *Is this issue strategic and pertinent across the Borough?*
- *What difference will it make if O&S looks at this issue?*

4.5 The topics included in the list below include those suggested by Panel members during the 2011/12 municipal year.

5. **Suggested Topics**

5.1 It is generally recommended that a Scrutiny Panel should aim to look at no more than two or three items in any one meeting. This limited number can prove challenging, but does allow the Panel to delve down into specific subject areas and fully scrutinise the work that is being undertaken.

5.2 The list below has been collated based on items that the Panel must include (for statutory reasons), where significant issues are scheduled to be brought forward for decision this year, or Members suggested them for consideration during the 2011/12 municipal year. This list is summarised (as per proposals) in table at Appendix A.

5.3 This is not an exhaustive list and includes officer recommendations for the possible handling of individual items:

Topic	Officer Recommendation
Police and Crime Commissioner – review of who was elected and what their expected priorities would be.	The election of the PCC is scheduled for the 15 November 2012. A look at their proposed priorities could be scheduled for the start of 2013.

Police and Crime Panel – the Slough representative to report back to the NCS Panel regularly on the work of the Panel.	The Panel is due to meeting for the first time in July 2012. Panel could request an update report from the Representative on the work of the Panel for September 2012.
Olympics – review of how local arrangements worked.	Recommend that this could be programmed in for November 2012.
Prostitution – monitoring of progress against action plan.	The Panel received two reports on the work to combat prostitution in Slough during 2011/12. Panel agreed that an Information Only report should be brought to them in January 2013 and if further issues were identified it could then be programmed in for a further discussion.
Housing Repairs Service Review	The Slough Customer Senate has proposed that the Panel consider the results of this Review.
Customer Complaints Review	The Slough Customer Senate has proposed that the Panel consider the results of this Review.
Customer Service Review	<p>The Slough Customer Senate has proposed that the Panel consider the results of this Review.</p> <p>The O&S Committee is going to be reviewing the Customer Service Strategy, and the Slough Customer Senate could feed into the O&S Committee's work, thereby avoiding duplication.</p>
Royal Berkshire Fire Service – the Service will be taking decisions on the allocation of specialist appliances during the year and this may be something that the Panel would like to look at.	Request from Cllr Minhas. We have received confirmation that there will be a public consultation on the proposals in October-December 2012, and the RBFS would be willing to present the options to the Panel for comment before the final decision is taken. Therefore I would recommend adding this to the Work Programme for November 2012.
Slough Sheds	Request from the O&S Committee that the NCS Panel look into this issue.
Parking Tickets/Fixed Penalty Notices (this is separate from Street Cleansing Fixed Penalty Notices)	<p>The Panel discussed looking at how effective the parking enforcement was at its meeting on 1/3/12.</p> <p>There has been a formal Call- in request</p>

	made to O&S Committee regarding this issue and the Committee has decided that it would like to look into this; therefore it should not be included in the NCS Work Programme as this would be duplication.
Chalvey Road Scheme – look at outcome of scheme	Request from the Chair and Vice Chair of the O&S Committee that the NCS Panel look into this issue.
Bus Station – Programme Management (Communications)	<p>Cllr Plenty has submitted a Call-in looking at the Bus Station, specifically around the communications including stakeholder analysis, effectiveness of consultation and managing expectations.</p> <p>The O&S Committee has requested that the NCS Panel complete a review of this matter and report back to it September/October 2012 which will then feed into a wider review that the Committee is undertaking into the Bus Station project as a whole.</p> <p>Due to the short timescale the NCS Panel should consider whether a Task and Finish Group is the most appropriate way to take this forward.</p>

5.4 This will be a continuous process, and flexibility and responsiveness vital to success. It is important not to over-pack the Panel's agenda at the start of the year, which will not allow the flexibility for the Panel to adapt to take into consideration issues that have arisen during the year.

6. **Resource Implications**

6.1 Overview and Scrutiny is supported by 1 FTE member of staff. This officer is responsible for supporting the O&S Committee and three Scrutiny Panels. Therefore, this is a finite resource and consideration must be given, in conjunction with the work programmes for the three Scrutiny Panels, as to how the resource is used during the year.

7. **Conclusion**

7.1 The proposals contained within this report highlight some of the key elements which the Panel must or may wish to scrutinise over the coming municipal year.

7.2 This report is intended to provide the Panel with information and guidance on how best to organise its work programme for the 2012/13 municipal year. As previously stated, this is an ongoing process and there will be flexibility to amend the programme as the year progresses, however, it is important that the Panel organises its priorities at the start of the year.

8. **Appendices Attached**

A - Draft Work Programme for 2012/13 Municipal Year

9. **Background Papers**

None.