

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 19 June 2013

CONTACT OFFICER: Sarah Forsyth – Scrutiny Officer
(For all Enquiries) (01753) 875657

WARDS: All

PART I

FOR COMMENT & DECISION

NEIGHBOURHOODS & COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL 2013/14 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 2013/14 municipal year.

2. Recommendations/Proposed Action

2.1 That the Panel:

- 1) identify the major issues it would like to cover in the 2013/14 municipal year; and
- 2) agree, where possible, timing for specific agenda items during the 2013/14 municipal year.

3. Joint Slough Wellbeing 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 authority's 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, 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 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.

4.6 The list of proposed agenda items is attached at Appendix A.

4.7 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.

5. **Resource Implications**

5.1 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.

6. **Conclusion**

6.1 This report is intended to provide the Panel with information and guidance on how best to organise its work programme for the 2013/14 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.

7. **Appendices Attached**

A - Draft Work Programme for 2013/14 Municipal Year

8. **Background Papers**

None.