

TO: COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15TH JULY 2003

SUBJECT: FUTURE WAY OF WORKING AND WORK PLAN

FROM: STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider a work programme for the forthcoming year and to agree the means of tackling that work.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting in June 2003 the Scrutiny Committee identified a list of issues that each Councillor felt were a priority. Inevitably there is a high degree of overlap and the issues therefore can be summarized as follows:

- Options for meeting the Decent Homes Standard
- Benefits provision for elderly and disabled/Anti Poverty matters
- Facilities for teenagers

- 2.2 Other items were raised that will not in the future be in the scope of this Committee as they will fall within the scope of the Economic Scrutiny Committee, viz:

- Anti Social Behaviour Orders/Community safety/late night disorder
- Leisure facilities for teenagers

- 2.3 Other items were raised that were not at that time in the scope of the Scrutiny and will remain outside following the proposals for change to scrutiny arrangements, including:

- Corporate Strategy (except where it relates specifically to Social matters)
- Local Strategic Partnership

- 2.4 In order to construct a work plan that can be reasonably achieved, Councillors need to consider what they wish to do to progress the items listed at 2.1 above. To assist Councillors, officers have done some research about how scrutiny is evolving elsewhere. Attached at Appendix 1 is a diagram which shows the 7 stage process adopted by Newham Council in London. Whilst not wholly appropriate it is suggested that Councillors use the approach and try it out.

2.5 If this is acceptable then Councillors are at stage 2 on that process and therefore need to answer the following questions in relation to the points listed at 2.1 above:

- Which aspect do you want to focus upon?
- What and whose evidence is required?
- Is an expert witness required?
- How is each piece of evidence best taken? – written, telephone, face to face
- Where will evidence be taken?
- Do you want to co-opt a user or expert?
- What research is required?
- How can the public best be involved?
- Do you want to generate publicity for the work?

2.6 This will allow officers to work up a programme taking into account that following each quarter of the year the Committee should focus on the performance of relevant services and scrutinize the portfolio holders.