

TO: **AUDIT AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –  
6 FEBRUARY 2007**

SUBJECT: **REVIEW OF WORKPLAN**

FROM: **MEMBERS SERVICES**

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1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To consider the annual work plan and agree any changes as necessary.

2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The work plan was considered at the last meeting of this Committee in the previous municipal year. The attached work plan at Appendix A incorporates the suggestions made at the last meeting.
- 2.2 Portfolio holders have set out their key actions for 2006/07 in the Portfolio holder statements. Attached at Appendix B is the latest version of the Forward Plan. Members may wish to consider these in determining if there are other matters they wish to scrutinise during the year.
- 2.3 Previously the Committee has agreed to determine the type of scrutiny work it will be carrying out, using one of the three approaches:-

**Select Committee style**

This is the most in-depth and resource intensive method of scrutiny and could be used where one or more of the following criteria are satisfied:

- High potential for service improvement - Substantial evidence of an issue
- Controversial/political
- Formal (parliamentary) approach to gathering evidence
- Need for high degree of transparency

This approach should adopt established project management techniques. Each stage will provide the information required for the next stage. In brief those stages are as follows:

**Stage one - Plan and Prepare**

**Stage two - Scrutiny investigation** – Identifying the issues

**Stage three - Options** - determining what needs to change in the future

**Stage four - Proposals and Recommendations** - report to Executive on findings of scrutiny.

**Stage five - Implementation** - Following Executive's endorsement, production of the final report and outline improvement plan. The Portfolio Holder and service department will need to develop the detailed plan.

**Stage six - Monitor and Review** - Improvement progress will be reported

**'Task and finish' sub-group**

This would involve delegating responsibility for investigating a specific area/issue to a sub-group of the Committee. This method can also usefully facilitate a crosscutting issue spanning of one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

This method could be used where one or more of the following criteria are satisfied:

- The need for a sensitive and safe environment (e.g. witnesses)
- To allow in-depth, off-line investigation and gathering of evidence
- To ensure a representative but focused approach
- To allow the space for off-site visits

The task and finish sub-group would undertake the scrutiny project 'off-line' and report back to the committee on completion.

### **'Perception Test' Scrutiny**

On occasion, there is the need for a quick, uncomplicated scrutiny exercise. On the back of an issue being identified, Members may wish to call in members of the community, service users, partners or others for sounding-out, to test perceptions and share early views. Feedback from such sessions would then allow a decision to be made as to whether there is the need for a more in-depth scrutiny.

Practice has shown that most of the work of this committee is 'Perception Test', often using progress reports. The Scrutiny review of the base budgets is a task and finish sub-group. Members are asked to consider if they wish to approach the scrutiny work in a different way.

- 2.4 Under the Committees work plan the Base Budget Task and Finish sub groups are due to provide verbal updates to this meeting.
- 2.5 The External Audit – Annual Audit & Inspection Letter 05/06 and Interim Audit Memorandum 06/07 report will not be brought to this meeting because the letter has not been received. This will now be considered at the 20 March 2007 meeting. The Internal Audit – Quarterly Review of Performance report was incorrectly included on the workplan for February, the report should have been dated to be included at the 20 March 2007 meeting.

### **3. POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK**

The work carried out by the Committee helps the Council to improve in line with its priority to manage services openly efficiently and effectively. All work for the Committee has to be carried out within existing resources.

### **4. OUTCOME REQUIRED**

The Committee considers the annual work plan attached at Appendix A and agrees any changes it wishes to make in the light of the forward plan and portfolio holder key actions for 2006/07.

Lucy Elrick  
Committee Services

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** None

**Areas in District Affected:** None Specific.  
**Executive Portfolio Area and Holder:** Corporate and Strategic Leadership  
Councillor Bob Crowther

**For further information about this report please contact:**

Contact Officer: Lucy Elrick  
Tel:(01926) 456005  
E-Mail: [lucy.elrick@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.elrick@warwickdc.gov.uk)