

Meeting:	Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub Committee
Date:	8 th June 2005
Subject:	Preparation for 2005 In-depth Reviews
Responsible Officer:	Director of Organisational Performance
Contact Officer:	Lynne McAdam
Portfolio Holder:	Environment and Transport Education and Lifelong Learning
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

- 1) That members consider the programming of the 2 areas of review that they have agreed for 2005/06
- 2) That members agree the membership of the review groups
- 3) That members agree the broad focus for the reviews as outlined in paragraph 2
- 4) That members consider the methodology for undertaking the reviews
- 5) That members agree to submit scope(s) and project plan(s) for agreement by the sub committee to its next meeting in September

Reason for report

The sub committee at its meeting in March agreed to undertake reviews of Tourism in Harrow and use of the borough's parks. This report seeks to progress these reviews by identifying:

- How each will be undertaken
- How it will be programmed
- Who the members of each of the sub committees will be; and
- The broad focus of the review

Benefits

Preparing for the 2005/06 reviews will mean that the programme can be delivered on time and the consequent benefits for residents can be realised.

Cost of Proposals

The costs associated with the delivery of the Environment and Economy sub committee's work programme will be met from within existing resources

Risks

If the sub committee does not reach a decision on the issues identified, the programme of reviews will be seriously delayed and the capacity of the sub committee to deliver its work programme jeopardised.

Implications if recommendations rejected

If the sub committee does not reach a decision on the issues identified, the programme of reviews will be seriously delayed and the capacity of the sub committee to deliver its work programme jeopardised

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

At its meeting on 10th March 2005 the Environment and Economy Sub Committee considered its work programme for the coming year and agreed to undertake in depth reviews of 'Tourism in Harrow' and 'Parks and Gardens Maintenance'. This report seeks Agreement from members as to how they wish to pursue the reviews.

It was broadly agreed when setting the work programme for 2005/06 that, in the light of the local council elections scheduled for May 2006, the programme of reviews for 2005/06 would need to be completed by the end of the financial year. As the time remaining for completion of the reviews is thus limited, it is likely that, if both reviews are to be undertaken as in-depth reviews then they must be undertaken concurrently.

However it may be preferable for the committee to undertake one as a priority and reschedule the other for the next municipal year or perhaps to consider it via a 'challenge panel' or mini review. The sub committee is asked to consider how it wishes to programme the reviews in the light of the resources available to it.

In order to begin work on the reviews and in the light of the comments above, the sub committee should also nominate members to sit on the review(s). The review membership can also include members of local organisations who have a particular interest in the subjects to be considered. The protocols previously followed for the establishment of reviews suggest that:

- “Once a decision has been taken to carry out a review, a Review Group needs to be established by the commissioning scrutiny committee. The membership of a Review Group may be drawn not only from the committee commissioning the review but from all Non-Executive Members of Council. However, no Member may be involved in scrutinising a decision in which he/she has been directly involved (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 2.2 refers). Although not debarred by the Constitution, Cabinet Assistants may wish to consider whether it is appropriate to participate in particular scrutiny reviews in light of their relationship to the Executive.
- The membership of the Review Group should normally be politically balanced.
- Non-Council Members with particular expertise or skills to contribute to a review may also be co-opted onto Review Groups. Although in this case any particular political allegiances are not critical, they should nevertheless be made known prior to co-option.
- Reviews can place heavy demands on the time of Review Group members, and a Review Group should therefore ideally comprise no less than 5 Members/co-optees.
- The Review Group should normally be appointed at a meeting of the committee commissioning the review. However, if this is not possible, the membership may be agreed by the Chair and Nominated Member(s) and reported to the next available meeting of the committee for endorsement.
- The committee should also appoint a Chair or Lead Member of the Review Group. Again, if this is not possible, it may be agreed by the Chair and Nominated Member and reported to the next available meeting of the committee for endorsement.”

In order to guide the development of the scope(s) which will be presented to the next meeting of the sub committee in September, the sub committee is also asked to consider the broad focus of the two reviews.

The Parks and Gardens Maintenance review could focus on:

- The role the parks can play in the successful development of the borough
- How the borough's parks and gardens are currently being used
- What local people would like to see available in the parks
- What if anything prevents them from using the parks

The review should also be guided by the findings of the recent Audit Commission inspection of cultural services, which considered the performance of the borough's parks.

The Tourism review should be informed by the recently agreed Tourism Strategy, which has identified a number of areas for development:

- Developing the tourism infrastructure – signage, information etc.
- Developing a tourism partnership – how the borough is marketed, what is needed to support tourism in the borough – both in its own right and as an attractive place to stay whilst visiting central London
- Maximising and marketing the range of visitor attractions – making the best use of existing attractions (Harrow School, Bentley Priory (when available), West House
- Marketing the borough's diversity as a tourist attraction

It may also be feasible to link the Parks review to the Tourism review by examining how well the parks are contributing to the tourism economy by attracting visitors the borough. In this way the 2 reviews might be completed concurrently.

2.2 Options considered
Not applicable to this report

2.3 Consultation
Not applicable to this report.

2.4 Financial Implications
There are no financial implications associated with this report.

2.5 Legal Implications
The Environmental assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 came into force in July 2004. This means that many of the council's plans and programmes including those on tourism and land use may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment before they are adopted. These regulations should be considered in the review process.

2.6 Equalities Impact

As with any scrutiny review, the importance of ensuring that the views of the borough's communities are able to influence service development and provision is critical. It should also be noted that the very diversity of the Harrow community is something which might be an issue to be recognised in the development of a coherent approach towards tourism.

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

- Protocols – Scrutiny Reviews v3