Meeting:	Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny sub committee
Date:	28 September 2006
Subject:	Scrutiny Work Programme
Responsible Officer:	Paul Najsarek, Director, People Performance and Policy
Contact Officer:	Heather Smith, Scrutiny Officer
Portfolio Holder:	Business Development
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part I

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

That the sub committee:
- Consider and agrees upon the major topics to be included in the work programme for 2006/07
- Consider the scheduling of longer term topics for the period 2006-2010

Reason for report

At the sub committee's first meeting, members received a report incorporating a long-list of items for potential inclusion in the work programme.

Members called for a further report to this meeting to determine a programme of work. This report is more specific regarding the possible prioritisation of topics for consideration, the programming of this work and appropriate methodologies.

When it has been agreed, the sub committee's work programme will be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny committee for information.

Benefits

The sub committee has the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of services for local people and the work of the council.

Cost of Proposals

The work programme will be managed within the scrutiny budget. No additional funding will be sought.

Risks

Failing to consider the work programme in detail may mean opportunities for scrutiny to contribute to the improvement of services for local people and the work of the council may be diminished.

Implications if recommendations rejected

The Overview and Scrutiny committee is required to agree a work programme each year. Each sub committee contributes to this process by determining its own work programme and feeding this into the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Failure to provide this to Overview and Scrutiny would mean this Committee would not be able to meet its constitutional responsibilities.

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

2.1.1 At the last meeting of the sub committee members called for a further report on the work programme to incorporate a higher level of detail with regard to scope, prioritisation and methodology for topics.

2.1.2 **Appendix A** details the major suggested areas of focus for the sub committee, as detailed in the previous report but with further elaboration relating to potential scoping and scheduling.

2.1.3 Members will want to consider the resources available to them in undertaking projects. It will only be feasible for the sub committee to undertake one in-depth review at any one time. However, where projects form part of larger programme, the sub committee should consider staggering projects to allow time for shorter pieces of work such as a challenge panel or light-touch review.

2.1.4 As well as Member resources, Members should also consider availability of officer resources, both within the scrutiny team and within teams or directorates subject to review.

2.1.5 **Appendix B** details suggested items for the sub committee's consideration during year one (2006/07) within the committee setting. Members should bear in mind that other issues may emerge during the course of the year that the sub committee may wish to consider. In

addition Members should consider whether ay of the suggested items would be better addressed in another way, for example though a challenge panel to allow more thorough consideration.

2.1.6   At the request of members attending the member development event on 11 July, **Appendix C** provides definitions of the major terms appearing within the sub committee's terms of reference, for information and future reference.

2.2   Consultation
During construction of the long list consultation took place with relevant Executive Directors and Directors, the community via Harrow's website and all Members of council.

2.3   Financial Implications
The scrutiny budget for 2006/07 is £340,400 which is made up of £266,050 for salaries and £74,350 for projects and other expenditure.   Any programme of work will be delivered within this provision.

2.5   Legal Implications
There are no legal implications.

2.6   Equalities Impact
Scrutiny reviews make a significant contribution to the improvement of services for Harrow's multicultural community.   When considering any item on the work programme across the year, the sub committee specifically takes into consideration how to engage with and meet the diverse needs of residents.

2.7   Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations
Individual scrutiny reviews may impact on crime and disorder and details are given in the Appendices.

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

Appendix A: Proposed topics for review

Appendix B: Year 1 - Proposed agenda items

Appendix C: Definition of key terms within the sub committee's terms of reference

Appendix A – Proposed topics for review

Programme	Topic	Year?	Context/reason for inclusion	Potential methodology
Safer Communities	Decision-making	Year 1	Mainstreaming of community safety within decision-making processes under s17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, contributing to preparations for corporate assessment.	Challenge panel
Voluntary sector	Grants	Second half Year 1 onwards	To examine the future role and purpose of grant funding.	In-depth review
Safer Communities	Anti-social behaviour	Year 1 or 2	This review could focus on changing attitudes and behaviour within the community, exploring the 'people' element of anti-social behaviour and respect. Anti social behaviour is a concern for residents and was suggested as a potential topic for review in a scrutiny survey of partner organisations.	In-depth review
Anti-poverty/ voluntary sector	Financial inclusion	Year 1 or 2	In order to tackle financial exclusion, the Government is focusing on access to banking, access to affordable credit and access to face-to-face money advice. The council has developed links with the Department for Work and Pensions relating to encouraging benefit take up, but there is scope for developing further advice services such as debt counselling. There is potential for exploring means of building capacity within the voluntary sector in order to provide services that meet the needs of Harrow's diverse communities.	In-depth review
	Liveability and public spaces/ Public realm	Year 2	Members could consider how lessons can be learned from the rollout of the existing scheme in terms of value for money and resident satisfaction, and how changes might be effected to expand the scope of the scheme. Members may also wish to look at outsourcing, and how contracting-out might affect the viability, accountability and effectiveness of service delivery in this high-profile area. The project could consider wider elements of liveability such as the built environment, town centres or urban space.	In-depth review
Area working	Extended schools	Year 2	Funding for extended schools ends in 2008. There is scope for a review of the achievement of the clusters and the potential way forward.	Light touch review

Programme	Topic	Year?	Context/reason for inclusion	Potential methodology
Area working	Neighbourhood working	Year 2	Governance arrangements for neighbourhood working. To be scheduled after the publication of the LSP white paper.	Light touch review
Safer Communities	Enviro-crime/ enforcement	Year 3 or 4	To consider the implications of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act.	In-depth review
Anti-poverty	Fuel poverty	No scheduling constraints	Fuel poverty is an issue affecting an increasing proportion of residents, not only those who are elderly. Rising energy prices, inefficient or non-existent insulation and central heating and other economic and environmental mean that those on a low income, and other vulnerable people.	In-depth review
Voluntary sector	Partnership working with the voluntary sector	No scheduling constraints	- To examine the council's approach to the voluntary and community sectors - To examine the effectiveness of partnership working (scope would not need to be limited to voluntary sector, depending on the sub committee's preferred focus)	In-depth review

This list is not exhaustive and Members should allow scope within the work programme to allow matters arising to be scheduled into the programme at a later date.

Deferred items: - Phone booth provision (as agreed by the sub committee on 5 July 2006)

Appendix B: Year 1 – Proposed agenda items

Topic	Reason	Date/other comments
Q&A with portfolio holder	To hold the portfolio holder to account. May inform work programme process.	September 2006 (and annually thereafter or as appropriate)
Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act	To be completed by 28 September 2006	September 2006
Community strategy refresh	The strategy sets the long-term direction for Harrow, in which priorities for Safer and Stronger will need to be reflected.	September 2006
Alcohol misuse	A new strategy to be agreed by the Safer Harrow Management Group	January 2007
Local Area Agreement refresh and MORI outcomes	The Local Area Agreement is a major output of the local strategic partnership and as such deserves attention from scrutiny because of its impact on quality of life.	January 2007
Reducing fear of crime in Harrow scrutiny review	To monitor progress against the recommendations from the review undertaken in 2005/06.	January 2007
Balanced scorecard for Safer Harrow Management Group (performance reporting)	A balanced scorecard is being developed to monitor the performance of the Safer Harrow Management Group. The Police and Justice bill is set to require local crime and disorder reduction partnerships to review their performance on a six monthly basis, which would provide an opportunity for the sub committee to hold the CDRP and relevant portfolio holder to account on a regular basis. The Borough Commander could be invited to attend.	January 2007 (and ongoing)
Crime and Disorder Act Review	To evaluate the impact of the legislation on the authority and on scrutiny.	January or April 2007?
Strategic objectives for community cohesion	To contribute to the development of objectives. A new team has been established within the Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services department of People First.	January or April 2007?
Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act	To consider the implications of the legislation on the authority	January or April 2007?

Appendix C: Definition of key terms

The sub committee's terms of reference (outlined in the council's constitution) give this sub committee specific responsibility for policy development and scrutiny of the functions in bold – the definitions provided are to help sub committee members in considering the scope and focus of their work.

Equalities: The principle of equal treatment between persons in the areas such as employment, education and access to services. It typically relates to gender, race and disability.

Community cohesion: A cohesive community is one where:
* There is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
* The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
* Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities and;
* Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.[1]

Partnership working: Local quality of life issues cut across traditional organisational boundaries; local organisations are encouraged to work together to overcome these barriers and improve local outcomes. A local strategic partnership (LSP) is a single body that brings together at a local level the different parts of the public sector as well as the private, business, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together.[2]

Crime & disorder: Crime and disorder reduction involves a range of activities, which include improving the physical security of vulnerable targets, improving the environment in an area and working towards a better quality of life. It is traditionally regarded as the responsibility of the police, but other agencies are now involved, including local government, the health service, primary care trusts, fire service and community groups.

Anti social behaviour: For the purpose of local authorities and the police applying for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order, the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998 formally defines anti-social behaviour as acting: *"in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as [the defendant]."*

Fear of crime: A belief, perception or emotion experienced by an individual or group in relation to crime and disorder which has a negative impact upon their feelings, thoughts or behaviour and their quality of life.[3]

Liveability: Creating cleaner, safer and greener communities by improving the quality of planning, design, management and maintenance of public spaces and the built environment.[4]

Public realm: Streets, pavements, rights-of-ways, parks and other publicly accessible open spaces, and public and civic buildings and facilities.[5] This also includes the maintenance of the public realm e.g. clean and green services, waste and recycling.

Regulatory functions: These include licensing, environmental health and enforcement.

Anti-poverty strategy: Strategy to address deprivation, which could include deprivation relating to Income, employment, health (including disability), education, skills and training, housing, access to services, the living environment and crime.[6]

Voluntary sector: Organisations that are independent of government and constitutionally self-governing, exist for the good of the community (to promote social, environmental or cultural objectives to benefit the community) and are not established for financial gain. These organisations vary in size, from small local groups staffed by volunteers, to large national charities.[7]

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[1] IDeA/LGA. (2006). *Leading cohesive communities: a guide for local authority leaders and chief executives.* p. 5
[2] DETR. (2001). *Local Strategic Partnerships – Government Guidance.* p. 4
[3] http://www.lbwf.gov.uk/index/safety/safetynet/fear-of-crime/fear-of-crime-definition.htm
[4] http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1127162
[5] http://www.burlington.ca/Planning/Official%20Plan/Part_VII/
[6] http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1128444#P25_3012
[7] http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/voluntaryandcommunity/background/