

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Head of Corporate Services

REPORT NUMBER **F217**

TO: COUNCIL

DATE OF MEETING: 17 April 2007

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (COMMUNITY SERVICES) COMMITTEE

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 In accordance with the Constitution, the Committee must report annually to Council on its work during the last year and make recommendations for future work programmes and if appropriate, amended working methods.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee's Annual Report for 2006/07 be noted.
- 2.2 That the Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee's Work Plan for 2007/08 be approved.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There have been no financial implications to date other than the costs of officer time and normal allowances for Members that are included in the budget.
- 3.2 Any development of the work of in depth scrutiny, including items such as the payment of out of pocket expenses for expert and other witnesses can be accommodated within existing budgets for 2007/08. The position for future years will be addressed through the Service and Financial Planning Process, if that is necessary.

4. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

This report is an update on work completed during 2006/07, together with a draft programme for 2007/08. Risk management considerations for individual topics will be included in reports to the Committee as the year progresses.

5. **KEY INFORMATION**

5.1 **WORK IN 2006/07**

Appendix 1 outlines the Committee's main areas of work in 2006/07. Many of the items included in the Committee's original work plan have been progressed by the Committee. In addition, Members have dealt with a number of topics which were not in the original work plan but have arisen during the year, for example Suffolk County Council's school organisation review. The following is a brief summary of the Committee's main achievements during the year:

- The Committee has discussed a number of issues relating to Children and Young People, including the Council's Youth Strategy, the County Council's review into the way schools are organised in Suffolk, and Babergh's contribution to the agenda for delivering better outcomes for children and young people.
- The draft Corporate Plan for 2006/07 has been scrutinized.
- Performance indicators have been monitored throughout the year, and since November 2006 in a format where financial and performance management is integrated, with clear linkages to Corporate Plan objectives.
- A considerable amount of work has been undertaken by the Service and Financial Planning Member Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to ensure that draft budgets reflect the Council priorities and approved policies. A joint meeting of the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees was held to consider the Budget Framework and the two committees then scrutinized the draft budget proposals before final approval by the Strategy Committee and Council.
- The Committee has considered the annual report of the Development Committee.
- The Committee has considered the Housing Panel's review of housing strategy, homelessness strategy, the housing Revenue Account business plan, the Housing Stock Options appraisal and the Sheltered Housing Review.
- Members have considered reports and presentations relating to the Haven Gateway Partnership, the Babergh East Local Strategic Partnership and the West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership. In relation to the latter, Members have expressed disappointment that only a limited amount of LSP funding has been specifically allocated to Sudbury and the West of Babergh. They have also indicated that they are not convinced of the merits of having two LSPs for Babergh, and have noted that there could be a case for a move to one LSP. There is strong support for a review of LSPs in the new Council.
- Reviews have been conducted into the Council's approach to overview and scrutiny and into the Call-In procedures.
- The Committee has also considered the Council's Arts and Community Development service and the Brown Bin Garden Waste Collection service.
- The Committee has considered a report on Babergh's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and received a presentation on this subject by Suffolk Constabulary's Community Safety and Partnership Manager. It has been agreed that a review is to be undertaken of the Council's CCTV scheme.

The following items on the Committee's original Work Plan for 2006/07 have not yet been considered:

- Review of process for managing void properties – This is awaiting the outcome of the Business Process Re-engineering programme.
- Review of the Council's contribution to promoting healthy living and reducing health inequalities – This was a priority focussed on during the State of the District Debate, and appropriate actions are set out in the Corporate Plan for 2007/08.

- Report on the possibility of Babergh becoming involved with community sentences, following seminars delivered by Suffolk Magistrates Association in 2006 – This work was postponed during the staff re-structuring exercise which included the establishment of a Community Safety Manager post. The post holder will develop the task when this position is filled.
- Review of grants – This is currently underway with the intention of a report being submitted to the Committee later in 2007.
- Audit of Babergh’s sustainability – This work was postponed while vacancies in the Policy and Communications Section were being filled. The original terms of reference should be reviewed as there have been further recommendations made by various committees (such those relating to rural post offices), which need to be incorporated.
- Progress report on free travel scheme for senior citizens – statistical information is being circulated, and a more detailed report will be submitted to the Committee later in 2007.

5.2 WORK PLAN FOR 2007/08

Appendix 2 sets out a list of items of work that Members and Officers have identified for consideration by the Committee during 2007/08.

6. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee: Resume of Work in 2006/07

Appendix 2 Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee: Proposed Work Plan for 2007/08

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:

None.

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