

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Head of Corporate Services

REPORT NUMBER **G231**

**TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(COMMUNITY SERVICES) COMMITTEE**

DATE OF MEETING: 25 March 2008

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This paper provides a basis for the Committee's annual report to Council.
- 1.2 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 Head of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Committee Chairman, complete the Committee's Annual Report for submission to the next meeting of Council based upon this report and the Committee's views.

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 2008/09. 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 2007/08, together with a draft programme for 2008/09. 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 2007/08**

Appendix 1 outlines the Committee's main areas of work in 2007/08. Two of the Committee's meetings have been held away from the Council Offices. The meeting on 4 September 2007 was held at The Quay Theatre, Sudbury; preceded by a tour of the building. The meeting on 30 January 2008 was held at The Granary, Sudbury; on the morning of the meeting some Committee Members were given a tour of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre, Sudbury.

The majority of the items included in the Committee's original work plan have been progressed by the Committee. Members have also dealt with a number of topics which were not in the original work plan but have arisen during the year; for example the Post Office Network Change Programme.

The following is a brief summary of the Committee's main achievements during the year:

- The draft Strategic Plan has been scrutinised.
- 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 for 2008/09 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.
- Capital and revenue budgets, including efficiencies, have been monitored regularly.
- Performance indicators have been monitored throughout the year. The Committee has spent some time discussing the way in which performance management information should be reported in future, and a new format has been agreed. User satisfaction and informal complaints handling have been considered.
- The Housing Panel's housing review has been considered and the Committee has received a presentation on affordable housing. Members have discussed a number of issues relating to Children and Young People, including the Council's Youth Strategy, Babergh's Play Strategy and the Council's contribution to the agenda for delivering better outcomes for children and young people.
- The Committee considered its response to the Post Office Network Change Programme which involves closure of post offices in Babergh. Representatives of some of the parishes affected attended the meeting.
- The Committee has considered reports relating to: a review of Babergh's grant-making process; CCTV; the South Suffolk Leisure Trust; the management of dual use facilities; and The Quay Theatre.

- The Committee has considered the annual report of the Development Committee, and has received reports concerning: enforcement activity; air quality; and clean neighbourhoods and environment.
- Members have considered reports and presentations relating to the West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership, the Babergh East Local Strategic Partnership and the Haven Gateway Partnership. The Committee has also agreed the criteria, methodology and timetable of a review of the Council's strategic partnerships.
- The Committee has adopted an Overview and Scrutiny Handbook.

5.2 WORK PLAN FOR 2008/09

Appendix 2 sets out a list of items of work that Members and Officers have identified for consideration by the Committee during 2008/09. It is recommended that the Committee should identify which, if not all, of the matters it considers should be addressed by the Committee in 2008/09 and importantly, what other areas it thinks should be considered for inclusion in the work programme. If any such areas are identified, an assessment sheet will need to be completed, a copy of which is attached at Appendix 3. In considering the future work plan, Members are asked to bear in mind the principles of PICK analysis which have been approved by the Committee. A summary is attached at Appendix 4. Further guidance on the selection of issues for inclusion in the annual work programme can be found in the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook.

6. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee: Resume of Work in 2007/08
- Appendix 2 Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee: Proposed Work Plan for 2008/09
- Appendix 3 Planning Assessment Sheet
- Appendix 4 PICK Analysis

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:

None.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (COMMUNITY SERVICES) COMMITTEE

RESUME OF WORK 2007/08

1. **STRATEGIC PLAN**

At a joint meeting with the Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee on 11 December 2007 the Committees scrutinised progress in developing the Council's Strategic Plan for the period 2008 to 2018. Members accepted proposals for a planning and review mechanism, which would involve a long-term high level Strategic Plan, a medium term 3 or 4 year development plan and an annual delivery plan. The issues and outcomes set out in the Strategic Plan were reviewed, and a number of additions were suggested.

2. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

2.1 **Service and Financial Planning and Draft Budget 2007/08**

At its meeting on 24 July 2007 the Committee appointed Mr Hurren and Mr Riley to serve as its representatives on the Service and Financial Planning (SFP) Group for 2007/08. Members also appointed Mr Hurren to serve on the Corporate Plan Working Group.

At the joint meeting on 11 December 2007 Members considered a report from the SFP Group setting out proposals for the 2008/09 Budget. They recommended these for approval by the Strategy Committee. They also accepted that a review should be undertaken of future Council Tax levels and all income generating opportunities, as a priority.

At its meeting on 30 January 2008 the Committee scrutinised the draft budget for 2008/09. Members recommended to the Strategy Committee that the draft budget be approved, including a proposal for a Council Tax increase of 3.9%.

2.2 **Budget Monitoring 2007/08**

Budget monitoring was carried out by means of Finance and Performance Quarterly Monitoring Reports considered by the Committee at its meetings on 4 September and 4 December 2007.

2.3 **Risk Management**

At its meeting on 12 June 2007 the Committee considered a report concerning the results of a comprehensive review of the Strategic Risks which had been agreed in May 2005. The 28 risks identified in 2005 had been reduced to nine broad themes, and the Committee recommended these for approval by the Strategy Committee.

On 29 August 2007 some of the Committee Members attended a Risk Management Seminar together with Members of the Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee and of the Strategy Committee.

3. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

3.1 Final Performance Indicators 2006/07

At its meeting on 12 June 2007 the Committee considered the 2006/07 end of year figures for the nationally set Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and the Local Performance Indicators (LPIs) set by Babergh. Members noted that the Government had announced its intention to make changes to the Performance Management framework with effect from April 2008.

3.2 Performance Monitoring

The year 2006/07 saw an improvement to the quarterly monitoring reports where performance against BVPI targets was integrated with updates on risk and financial management, with clear linkages to Strategic Plan objectives. In 2007/08 Officers have continued to submit these joint reports, which were considered by the Committee at its meetings on 4 September and 4 December 2007.

At its meeting on 4 September 2007 the Committee considered a report setting out options for the presentation of performance information to further assist Members in their Overview and Scrutiny roles. It was agreed that the Committee should receive a report on a “basket” of key indicators, together with any other significant exceptions. In addition, Members agreed that once a year the Committee should receive a report on all PIs, and that this should be linked to the annual target-setting exercise.

A proposed “basket” of PIs was put to the Committee at its meeting on 16 October 2007 and was agreed, subject to a few amendments.

The monitoring reports have prompted the Committee to question the Council’s planning performance; in particular concerns about the poorer performance on ‘other planning applications’. They have also caused Members to question the length of time taken to re-let empty Council dwellings.

At its meeting on 30 January 2008 the Committee received a report concerning potential changes needed to aspects of the Council’s Performance Management arrangements as a result of the new National Performance Management Framework, and approved a project plan to deal with the changes.

3.3 User Satisfaction

At the meeting on 4 September 2007 the Committee considered a report summarising the results of four Best Value User Satisfaction Surveys. Officers were asked to draw up a report on informal complaints handling. An interim report was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 4 December 2007. It set out the results of research into current best practice in four high performing district councils. Officers were asked to explore the issues identified through further research.

4. **COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Housing

At its meeting on 12 June 2007 the Committee received a PowerPoint presentation on the delivery of affordable housing in Babergh.

At its meeting on 4 September 2007 the Committee considered a report on the 2007 Housing Review carried out by the Housing Panel. No major policy changes were considered necessary but the Committee made a number of recommendations to the Strategy Committee and Council.

At its meeting on 16 October 2007 the Committee agreed that the Council's process for re-letting vacant council housing should be reviewed and re-engineered to increase performance and rental income.

Children and Young People

At its meeting on 24 July 2007 the Committee considered a report setting out a summary of actions achieved in 2006/07 in relation to the Youth Strategy. It also approved an Action Plan for 2007/08. Officers gave a presentation highlighting achievements and plans. Three young people attended the meeting to answer questions about the BeActive(Leisure Inclusion) project, the Theatre Critics project and the Community Achievement Awards.

At its meeting on 24 July 2007 the Committee received information about the formulation of a Play Policy for Babergh. This was approved by the Strategy Committee at its meeting on 16 August 2007.

Also at its meeting on 24 July the Committee considered a report updating Members on the Council's contribution to the agenda for delivering better outcomes for children and young people.

Post Office Network Change Programme

At the Committee's meeting on 16 October 2007 there was a presentation by the Network Development Manager of Post Office Ltd, outlining the background to the decision to close four post offices in the District, and to operate one as an Outreach Service. Four representatives of the affected towns and parishes were present at the meeting as observers and, during an adjournment, they were given the opportunity to ask questions. The Committee's views were reported to the Strategy Committee, who agreed a response to Post Office Ltd.

Review of Grants

Members were invited to a consultation event on 23 July 2007, and at its meeting on 4 September 2007 the Committee considered a report on a review of Babergh's grant making process. Members recommended that the existing process be streamlined, and that a new grants policy be developed.

CCTV

At its meeting on 16 October 2007 the Committee considered a report detailing the results of a feasibility study into alternative arrangements for the monitoring and recording of CCTV footage in Babergh. One of the options was recommended to the Strategy Committee for adoption.

South Suffolk Leisure (SSL)

At its meeting on 24 July the Committee received a report introducing the SSL annual report for the year 2006/07. The SSL Chief Executive made a PowerPoint presentation, and she and the Chairman of the SSL Board answered Members' questions. Members expressed an interest in visiting the Kingfisher Leisure Centre and the Hadleigh Swimming Pool. A tour of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre took place on 30 January 2008, prior to an informal meeting with the SSL Board to discuss an Audit Commission report on partnership working.

Dual Use Facilities

At its meeting on 24 July 2007 the Committee considered a report concerning management options for dual use facilities, and the Quay Theatre, Sudbury. It was resolved that the current management arrangements should be continued for the time being.

4.8 The Quay Theatre

The Committee held its meeting on 4 September 2007 at The Quay Theatre, and the meeting was preceded by a tour of the building. During the meeting Members considered the Annual Report on the Theatre.

5. **NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Planning and Development

At its meeting on 24 July 2007 the Committee considered the Annual Report of the Development Committee for 2006/07. It was agreed that the system for monitoring and tracking all payments due to the Council under Section 106 Planning Obligations should be enhanced by the expansion of a table relating to planning contributions set out in an appendix to the report to include columns referring to monies paid and the parishes in which the monies had been spent.

Enforcement Activity

At its meeting on 16 October 2007 the Committee considered a report providing an overview of enforcement activity undertaken within the Natural and Built Environment Division. Members called for a further report covering a number of specific items.

At the same meeting Members agreed that a review of the Council's regulatory and enforcement responsibilities should be undertaken and within that, the processes used to secure an effective outcome.

Air Quality Annual Progress Report

In accordance with the requirements of the Environment Act 1995 the Council is required to undertake three-yearly "Updating and Screening Assessments" of air quality across the District and to report annually on progress in implementing air quality management. This annual report was received at the Committee's meeting on 24 July 2007. Members expressed concern about elevated concentrations of pollution in Cross Street and at Ballingdon Bridge, Sudbury, and requested an update on further analysis being undertaken.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment

At its meeting on 4 September 2007 the Committee considered a report setting out a draft strategy to provide a framework to guide the Council's approach to an efficient and effective enforcement of environmental crimes. Members recommended that the draft strategy be adopted, subject to any necessary minor amendments arising from consultation with stakeholders.

6. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Reports from representatives on outside bodies

At its meeting on 4 December 2007 the Committee received reports and presentations from the Council's representatives on the Western Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership, the Babergh East Local Strategic Partnership and the Haven Gateway Partnership. Members noted that the Babergh East LSP had recommended that the authority should extend the remit of the LSP to cover the whole of the District, but had subsequently accepted an offer to feed into a review of strategic partnerships.

6.2 Review of Strategic Partnerships

At its meeting on 4 December 2007, the Committee agreed the criteria, methodology and timetable of a review of the Council's strategic partnerships.

7. LOCAL DEMOCRACY/EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING

7.1 Overview and Scrutiny Handbook

At its meeting on 4 December 2007 the Committee received an Overview and Scrutiny Handbook, which had been developed as part of an Action Plan arising from a review of the Overview and Scrutiny role undertaken in 2006. Members agreed to adopt the Handbook as a guide for councillors and officers on how to carry out Overview and Scrutiny.

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**FROM: HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES REPORT NUMBER****TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(COMMUNITY SERVICES)
COMMITTEE****DATE OF MEETING****DRAFT WORK PLAN FOR 2008/09****DATE OF COMMITTEE – 20 MAY 2008**

Topic	Purpose	Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council	Lead Officer
Service and Financial Planning/Strategic Planning	To consider arrangements for 2008/09	Decision	Barry Hunter
Reports from representatives on outside bodies	To receive six-monthly reports	Decision	Various Members
Customer Care and Informal Complaints Handling	To consider proposed measures, resources and timescales for addressing customer satisfaction issues	To be determined	Bob Southgate/ Janice Rees
Air Quality	Follow-up from Annual Air Quality Report – Cross Street and Ballingdon Bridge, Sudbury	To be determined	Malcolm Firth
Action Plan for improving satisfaction with street cleansing	To agree proposals for improvements and approve the Action Plan	To be determined	Malcolm Firth
Review of the effectiveness of new enforcement arrangements	To receive an update	Decision	Malcolm Firth
Review of Babergh's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP)	To consider the review	Decision	Paul Little

DATE OF COMMITTEE – 1 JULY 2008

Topic	Purpose	Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council	Lead Officer
Annual Report of Development Committee	To consider report	Decision	Nick Ward
Community Development Partnerships	To consider annual reports of the South Suffolk Leisure Trust, Active South Suffolk and the Quay Theatre	Decision	Chris Foti
Proposed development of Kingfisher Leisure Centre	To consider detailed plans and business case	Recommendation to Strategy	Paul Little
Finance and Performance Management	To consider the final position for 2007/08 and targets for the period up to 2010/11	Decision	Barry Hunter/ Janice Rees
Performance Management	To approve new basket of key PIs for the 08/09 quarterly reporting cycle	Decision	Janice Rees
Asset Management and Built Environment Partnership	To consider a report from the Joint Board on Waste and Recycling Services	Decision	Malcolm Firth/ Ryan Jones

DATE OF COMMITTEE – 19 AUGUST 2008

Topic	Purpose	Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council	Lead Officer
Babergh's Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy, HRA Business Plan and Housing Stock Options Appraisal Review	To consider the Housing Panel's review.	Recommendation to Strategy	Chris Foti

DATE OF COMMITTEE – 7 OCTOBER 2008

Topic	Purpose	Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council	Lead Officer
Finance and Performance Management – Quarterly Report	To consider update on 2008/09 budget and performance	Decision	Barry Hunter/ Janice Rees

DATE OF COMMITTEE – 25 NOVEMBER 2008

Topic	Purpose	Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council	Lead Officer
Reports from representatives on outside bodies	To receive six-monthly reports	Decision	Various Members
Report on street trading hour restrictions on Sudbury Market Hill during daytime	To consider whether changes should be made to current restrictions	To be determined	Malcolm Firth

DATE OF COMMITTEE – 9 DECEMBER 2008
JOINT MEETING WITH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(STEWARDSHIP) COMMITTEE (IF REQUIRED)

Topic	Purpose	Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council	Lead Officer
Report of the Service and Financial Planning Group	To consider the Group's recommendations	To be determined	Barry Hunter

DATE OF COMMITTEE – 3 FEBRUARY 2009

Topic	Purpose	Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council	Lead Officer
Budget Scrutiny	To scrutinise draft budgets for 2009/10	Recommendation to Strategy	Barry Hunter
Finance and Performance Management – Quarterly Report	To consider update on 2008/089 budget and performance	Decision	Barry Hunter/ Janice Rees

Topic	Purpose	Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council	Lead Officer
Annual Report on Babergh Grants Scheme	To consider a summary of projects supported, outputs and how they meet Corporate objectives	Decision	Neil Henry

DATE OF COMMITTEE – 31 MARCH 2009

Topic	Purpose	Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council	Lead Officer
Finance and Performance Management – quarterly report	To consider update on 2008/09 budget and performance	Decision	Barry Hunter/ Janice Rees
Annual Report	To consider draft Annual Report for 2007/08	Recommendation to Council	Andrew Hunkin
Babergh's New Tenant Participation Compact	To consider the revised arrangements	Decision	David Clarke

OTHER TOPICS IDENTIFIED FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Topic	Lead Officer	Proposed Committee Date
Audit of Babergh's sustainability	Andrew Hunkin	To be determined.
Monitoring the Emergency Planning Action Plan	Andrew Hunkin	To be determined
Progress report on free travel scheme for senior citizens	Bob Southgate	To be determined
Annual review of Local Authority Business Grant Incentive Scheme	Neil Henry	To be determined

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY () COMMITTEE

PLANNING ASSESSMENT SHEET FOR REVIEWS

What is to be reviewed?	
Why?	
What benefits are expected?	
What needs to be examined and asked?	
Documents/evidence/research <i>What?</i> <i>Why?</i>	Questions to be asked
Site visits <i>Where?</i> <i>Why?</i>	Questions to be asked
Consultation <i>Who/what?</i> <i>Why?</i>	Questions to be asked
Witnesses <i>Who?</i> <i>Why?</i>	Questions to be asked
What resources will be needed for the review?	
Over what period should it be carried out?	Start Complete
Who will be the lead officer?	

PICK ANALYSIS

In developing its annual work programme, Overview and Scrutiny Committees should be clear about the reasons for selecting particular issues and what they are seeking to achieve.

The list of topics and issues for the work programme can be a very long one if not careful. Some councils use an idea called PICK to prioritise the types of issues to choose. PICK stands for:

- P Public Interest
- I Impact
- C Council Performance
- K Keep it Context

P for Public Interest

Councillors are the eyes and ears of the public, ensuring that the policies, practices and services delivered by both Babergh District Council and external organizations, are meeting local needs and to an acceptable standard. The concerns of local people should therefore influence the issues chosen for scrutiny.

I for Impact

Scrutiny is about making a difference to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. Not all issues of concern will have equal impact on the well-being of the community. This should be considered when deciding the work programme and priority be given to those issues that have more impact.

C for Council Performance

Scrutiny is about improving performance and ensuring the people of Babergh are served well. Councillors will need good quality information to identify areas of poor performance both within the Council and externally. There are no shortage of Performance Indicators available in the public service arena, both national and local, although the quality and relevance will vary. There is a need to select the most relevant performance indicators and to seek an interpretation of results.

K for Keep it in Context

To avoid duplication or wasted effort priorities should take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered. Is there a Best Value Review happening or planned? Is the service about to be inspected by an external body? Are there major legislative or policy initiatives already resulting in change? If these circumstances exist councillors may decide to link up with other processes (e.g. Best Value Review) or defer a decision until the outcomes are known or conclude that the other processes will address the issues.

PICK CHECKLIST

More “ticks” across all four categories indicates that the topic is more suitable for in depth review.

<p>Public Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is evidence of significant public interest in this topic <input type="checkbox"/> It is a “high profile” topic for specific local communities or communities of interest <input type="checkbox"/> This is an area where we received a lot of complaints and / or bad press <input type="checkbox"/> The review will need to include participatory events and opportunities for local people and / or organizations to have their say <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial survey or research work is required
<p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> This review will have a significant impact on the “well being” of Babergh <input type="checkbox"/> A local community or community of interest have much to gain or lose <input type="checkbox"/> Work is needed to develop the routes to influencing change (e.g. with partners) <input type="checkbox"/> This could make a big difference to the way services are delivered <input type="checkbox"/> This could make a big difference to the way resources are used
<p>Council Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The Council and / or other organizations are not performing well in this area <input type="checkbox"/> We do not understand why our performance differs from others <input type="checkbox"/> We are performing well but spending too much money in this area <input type="checkbox"/> There are few local or national performance measures / targets for this service <input type="checkbox"/> This service is fundamental to the achievement of Council objective(s)
<p>Keep in Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> This service will not be part of a BV Review or external inspection in the next 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> This service will be reviewed or inspected soon but Scrutiny can make a positive contribution by focusing on key areas of interest and making recommendations <input type="checkbox"/> This service has not been recently reviewed or inspected <input type="checkbox"/> There are no current major changes to service that reduce or pre-empt the value of review <input type="checkbox"/> Service changes are planned and Scrutiny can positively influence change