

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**FROM:** Head of Corporate Services

**REPORT NUMBER**    **F211**

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

**DATE OF MEETING:** 27 March 2007

**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 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 West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership, the Babergh East Local Strategic Partnership and the Haven Gateway Partnership.
- 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 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. It is recommended that the Committee should identify which, if not all, of the matters it considers should be addressed by the Committee in 2007/08 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.

## 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
- 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 IN 2006/07****1. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**Youth Strategy

- 1.1 At its meeting on 30 May 2006 the Committee considered a report summarizing the actions achieved in 2005/06 with regard to young people and recommended a 2006/07 Action Plan for approval by the Strategy Committee. This was subsequently approved.
- 1.2 Two Hadleigh High School pupils spoke about their contributions to the Theatre Critic Project and answered questions from Members. In addition, Jill Barton, Corporate Support Officer, and Susie Tyrell, Arts and Community Development Officer, made a presentation to the meeting on their work with young people. Members highlighted the benefits of good publicity, the importance of keeping Members informed of initiatives in their Wards, and the need to ensure that young people in the more rural areas of the District were able to take advantage of the opportunities on offer.

Review into the Way Schools in Suffolk are organized

- 1.3 At its meeting on 25 July 2006 the Committee considered a report concerning a consultation exercise being carried out by the County Council as part of a review into how schools are organized in Suffolk. Presentations and contributions were made by a County Council officer, a Babergh officer, a Babergh Member, and two governors of schools in the District. The meeting emphasized the importance of retaining village schools because of their central role in ensuring the viability of village communities. A response to the County Council based on the Committee's discussion was subsequently approved by the Strategy Committee.
- 1.4 At their meeting on 6 February 2007 Members received a presentation, updating them on progress since the completion of the consultation exercise. Two County Council officers answered their questions and it was agreed that a letter would be sent to the County Council setting out the main points of the discussion, relating to the optimum size of sixth form colleges, the future of village schools, the possible environmental impact of school closures and the need for a careful approach to change management.

Children and Young People Progress Report

- 1.5 At its meeting on 5 September 2006 the Committee considered a report providing an update on the Council's contribution to the agenda for delivering better outcomes for children and young people. It was agreed that further information was needed in order to judge the effectiveness of the new arrangements and that a more detailed report should be submitted to the Committee in 2007. At the Committee's suggestion, part of a Members' Seminar was devoted to the subject of Children and Young People.

## **2. CORPORATE PLAN**

- 2.1 At its meeting on 6 February 2007 the Committee considered the draft Corporate Plan for 2007/08 and suggested some possible minor amendments. These were considered by the Corporate Plan Working Group and the Plan was subsequently approved by the Strategy Committee and Council. It was noted that the new Council will be asked to adopt the 2007/08 Plan for its first year while it reviews and revises a Corporate Plan for the period from 2008/09 onwards.

## **3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

### Best Value Performance Indicators and Performance Management

- 3.1 At its meetings on 30 May, 5 September and 17 October 2006 the Committee considered reports setting out Best Value Performance Indicator data. At the September meeting Members expressed concern that no data was available for a number of Local Performance Indicators (LPIs) and requested that further information be provided. This was supplied at the October meeting, although there remained nine LPIs for which information was lacking.
- 3.2 At the Committee's meeting on 6 February 2007 Members received performance management data within a report where this information was integrated with an update on financial management, the aim being to give a clearer overall picture and to clarify linkages to Corporate Plan objectives.
- 3.3 Also at their meeting on 6 February 2007, Members received a report setting out the 2005/06 Best Value Performance Indicators for English authorities, showing whether Babergh's performance had improved during that period when compared to others. They expressed concern about a number of BVPIs where performance appeared to be poor, and requested further information on these areas.

## **4. FINANCIAL MATTERS**

### Service and Financial Planning and Draft Budget

- 4.1 At its meeting on 30 May 2006 the Committee nominated Mr Hunt, Mr Hurren and Mr Grimsey to serve on the Service and Financial Planning (SFP) Group. Members confirmed that they saw value in holding a joint meeting of the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees in December to consider the recommendations of the Group.
- 4.2 This joint meeting took place on 11 December 2006 to consider a report from the SFP Group setting out proposals for the 2007/08 Budget. Members recommended these for approval by the Strategy Committee. They also expressed support for a Council Tax increase of 2.9%.
- 4.3 At its meeting on 6 February 2007 the Committee scrutinized the draft budget for 2007/08. Members recommended to the Strategy Committee that the draft budget be approved subject to one amendment. They endorsed a proposal that there be further consideration on the future capital and borrowing requirements early in the life of the new council, and they emphasized the importance of seeking savings through joint working with other authorities.

## **5. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### Annual Report of the Development Committee for 2005/06

- 5.1 At its meeting on 5 September 2006 the Committee considered the Annual Report of the Development Committee. There was a wide-ranging discussion covering issues such as planning contributions, the planning delivery grant, performance targets and Business Process Re-engineering. It was noted that the Council was seeing an increase in the number of planning applications relating to alternative energy, and Members suggested that a training session be held on the issues surrounding alternative energy installations. This was subsequently incorporated into the Members' training programme.

## **6. HOUSING**

### The Housing Panel's 2006 Housing Review

- 6.1 At its meeting on 25 July 2006 the Committee received a report from the Housing Panel concerning its review of: Babergh's Housing Strategy 2004-2009; the Homelessness Strategy; the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan; the Housing Stock Options Appraisal; and the Sheltered Housing Review. A number of recommendations were made to the Strategy Committee and Council concerning

- the sale or transfer of land or property for the delivery of affordable housing
- 'Growth' theme bids for Social Housing Grant
- a feasibility study into options for the future use of Stour House
- arrangements for changes to the sheltered housing structure and the terms and conditions of sheltered housing staff
- a full Housing Stock Option Appraisal to be commissioned in 2009/10
- Babergh's response to the Gypsy and Travellers Needs Assessment
- an implementation plan for Babergh's Choice Based Lettings Scheme

These were subsequently approved.

## **7. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

### Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)

- 7.1 At the Committee's meeting on 17 October 2006 Mr C Spence, Babergh's representative on the Western Suffolk LSP Board, presented a report about the LSP, and Mr D Wood, Manager of the WSLSP, gave a Powerpoint presentation outlining the ways in which Performance Reward Grant monies would be spent. Ms C Harvey, the County Council's Local Public Service Agreement Manager, gave a presentation concerning actions planned to tackle a number of current problems.
- 7.2 Mrs S P Clarke, Babergh's representative on the Babergh East LSP Board presented a report updating Members on the progress made to date. She outlined six projects on which the LSP was focusing.

## **8. OTHER MATTERS**

### Review of Overview and Scrutiny Role and Approach

- 8.1 At its meeting on 30 May 2006 the Committee considered the report of a Working Group which had carried out a review of the Overview and Scrutiny role and approach. Members approved an Action Plan aimed at making scrutiny at Babergh more effective and focused.

### Review of Call-In Procedures

- 8.2 At its meeting on 17 October 2006 the Committee considered a report by a Working Group set up to review the Council's call-in procedures. Members accepted the Group's recommendations for onward submission to Strategy Committee and Council, subject to one amendment making the Chairman of the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee responsible, in consultation with the Head of Corporate Services and the Monitoring Officer, for considering the validity of any call-in request.
- 8.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees recommended that the decision on the validity of a call-in request should be made having regard to a new protocol, the aim of which was to provide guidance on the circumstances when a decision might be called in. The Strategy Committee asked the Overview and Scrutiny Committees at their joint meeting on 11 December to clarify a number of points and to ensure that the Constitution and the protocol were not in conflict.
- 8.4 The joint meeting was presented with two ways in which the recommendations could be incorporated into the Constitution, either with or without a protocol. The joint meeting chose to recommend to Council that the version *with* a protocol be approved, subject to one amendment to the protocol. This recommendation was subsequently approved by Council.

### Question from a Member: CCTV

- 8.5 At its meeting on 6 February the Committee considered a question from a Member relating to the use CCTV cameras in the District. The Committee is due to receive a report on community safety in Babergh, and has asked that the subject of CCTV be included in the report.

### Arts and Community Development

- 8.6 The Council's Arts and Community Development Officer gave a presentation to the Committee at its meeting on 6 February 2007. She outlined the impact of the Arts and Community Development Service in the period from August 2005 to January 2007.

### Brown Bin Garden Waste Collection Service

- 8.7 In response to a Notice of Motion submitted to the Council on 19 December 2006, the Committee at its meeting on 6 February 2007 considered whether the Council should offer its brown bin garden waste collection service free to persons who are registered disabled. It was agreed to recommend to the Strategy Committee that the current arrangements for the collection of garden waste should remain, with charges being reduced for qualifying individuals in accordance with the Council's strategic charging policy.

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL****FROM: HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES      REPORT NUMBER****TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
(COMMUNITY SERVICES)  
COMMITTEE****DATE OF MEETING****DRAFT WORK PLAN FOR 2007/08****DATE OF COMMITTEE – 12 JUNE 2007**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Overview of Decision</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Service and Financial Planning	To consider arrangements for 2007/08	Decision	Helen Style
Finance and Performance Management	To note the final position for 2006/07 and targets for the period up to 2009/10	Decision	Andrew Hunkin/Barry Hunter
Air Quality	To consider the results of extended monitoring of air quality in Cross Street, Sudbury	To be determined	Malcolm Firth

**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 24 JULY 2007**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Overview of Decision</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Annual Report of Development Committee	To consider report	Decision	Richard Watson

**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 4 SEPTEMBER 2007**  
**(TO BE HELD AT THE QUAY THEATRE)**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Overview of Decision</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Finance and Performance Management – Quarterly Report	To note update on 2007/08 budget and performance	Decision	Andrew Hunkin/Barry Hunter
Quay Theatre	To note annual report for 2006/07	Decision	Chris Foti
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
South Suffolk Leisure Monitoring Report	To note progress	Decision	Chris Foti

**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 16 OCTOBER 2007**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Overview of Decision</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Reports from representatives on outside bodies	To receive six-monthly reports	Decision	Various Members

**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 4 DECEMBER 2007**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Overview of Decision</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Finance and Performance Management quarterly report	To note update on 2007/08 budget and performance	Decision	Andrew Hunkin/Barry Hunter

**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 11 DECEMBER 2007**  
**JOINT MEETING WITH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**  
**(STEWARDSHIP) COMMITTEE (IF REQUIRED)**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Overview of Decision</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Report of the Service and Financial Planning Group	To consider the Group's recommendations	To be determined	Helen Style

**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 5 FEBRUARY 2008**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Overview of Decision</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Budget Scrutiny	To scrutinise draft budgets for 2008/09	Recommendation to Strategy	Helen Style
Corporate Plan Scrutiny	To scrutinise draft revised Corporate Plan for 2008/12	Recommendation to Strategy	Andrew Hunkin
Finance and Performance Management	To note update on 2007/08 budget and performance	Decision	Andrew Hunkin/Barry Hunter
National Performance Indicator Comparisons 2006/07	To note position	Decision	Andrew Hunkin

**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 25 MARCH 2008**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Overview of Decision</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Reports from representatives on outside bodies	To receive six-monthly reports	Decision	Various Members
Annual Report	To consider draft Annual Report for 2007/08	Recommendation to Council	Andrew Hunkin

**OTHER TOPICS IDENTIFIED FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Proposed Committee Date</b>
Review of Process for Managing Void Properties	Chris Foti/Ryan Jones	To be undertaken when Council agrees to a full Business Process Re-engineering exercise.
Report on the possibility of Babergh becoming involved with community sentences, following seminars delivered by Suffolk Magistrates Association	Chris Foti	To be determined
Review of Grants	Tim Mutum	To be determined.
Audit of Babergh's sustainability	Andrew Hunkin	To be determined.
Evaluation of strategic partnerships	Andrew Hunkin/Tim Mutum	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

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ( ) COMMITTEE

## PLANNING ASSESSMENT SHEET FOR REVIEWS

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

### PICK ANALYSIS

In developing their annual work programmes, 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. PICK can be used to prioritise the types of issues to choose. PICK stands for:

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