

**COMMITTEE:** HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 13<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2010

**REPORT OF:** ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (STRATEGY, AND DEMOCRACY)

**REPORT TITLE:** SCRUTINY REVIEW SELECTION PROCESS

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**1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To consider the relationship between the Business Improvement, Transformation and Efficiency (BITE) strategy and the scrutiny review process in the current municipal year alongside the arrangements for scoping of reviews identified under the BITE Strategy.

**2.0 Current position**

- 2.1 The BITE strategy was developed in order to ensure the viability of the Medium Term Financial Plan. The purpose of the BITE strategy is to ensure the delivery of efficiency savings and improvement in the next financial year and thereafter for the next 2/3 years. The intention is to achieve this through a mix of actions stemming from the Corporate Efficiency Plan, BITE interventions and the “normal” requirement for annual efficiency savings.
- 2.2 In pursuance of this, and following a value for money/benchmarking exercise across the whole of the Council’s operations, some 25 services have been put forward for a more in-depth exploration using the BITE approach to assess the scope for efficiencies and improvement within these targeted areas. This is essentially step 3 of a BITE intervention. It should be noted that apart from this major programme of BITE scoping exercises, it is expected that all other services will continue to contribute to efficiency savings in the normal way.
- 2.3 The services within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee which are included in the scoping exercise and the reason for their inclusion are as follows:

**Section 75 Partnership**

What’s in scope – To review the operation of the current agreement in the light experience to ensure that progress is being made to secure the anticipated efficiencies and improved outcomes for service users.

**Social Care Finance** (Gross Budget £0.707m)

What’s in scope – To review the current operation of the function within Business Services Directorate to achieve better value for money and improved outcomes for services users. This exercise will link with the other scoping exercises within Adult Social Care.

- 2.4 The scoping exercise during June and July will involve leaders of the relevant services, supported by members of the Business Improvement Team, Vanguard consultants or a mix of both gaining a more detailed understanding of how their ‘system’ is currently operating. The exercise will provide benefits for both the team and the organisation.
- 2.5 The scoping exercise will provide the teams with:

- a greater understanding of current performance from a service user perspective
- an understanding of the scope for improvement
- an appreciation of the costs associated with delivering the current system and the scope for reducing them
- an informed choice about what the next course of action should be.

- 2.6 The whole scoping exercise will provide the council with:
- much greater clarity about where the efficiency savings will come from
  - which service areas should progress down the BITE systems intervention/systems thinking route
  - A programme re delivery of projects in year 1
  - A replicable approach for years 2 and 3

- 2.7 The outcomes of the scoping exercise – the anticipated efficiencies and how these might best be realised – will subsequently be reported to the Corporate Leadership Team to determine the programme of action and priorities for levering out efficiency savings. It is expected that some of these efficiency savings will require a policy decision on the part of the Council and therefore elected members will be kept closely informed of the progress.

### **3.0 Scrutiny Review Process**

- 3.1 At the start of the municipal year, Scrutiny Committees identify suitable topics for scrutiny reviews during the course of the year, and other issues that they wish to include within their respective work programmes. The Committees have access to a range of information, including:

- Performance information
- Issues identified by Area Committees (current issues identified by Area Committees are listed in Appendix 1)
- An overview of key issues affecting directorates over the next 12/18 months supplied by Corporate Directors.

- 3.2 Last year scrutiny committees were engaged in a process to consider both the priorities of the Council for the next financial year and the medium term financial strategy. To help start planning for the significant challenges that face the Council the Executive requested Scrutiny Committees' views on what they considered should be priorities from 2011/12 onwards given the financial prospects, and also areas where efficiency savings and other cost reductions could be achieved. This took place in the autumn committee cycle. It was a process driven by scrutiny chairs and a final report was prepared that was then considered by the Executive. There were benefits from this process as well as some lessons learnt. The benefits largely focussed on an opportunity to engage members from all parties at an early stage in the financial planning and decision making re priority service areas. Any lessons regarding making sure robust business cases were prepared for members consideration can be incorporated into any further engagement with scrutiny committees in the same way.

- 3.3 This year, Scrutiny Committees also need to have regard to the Coalition Agreement published by the new government and issues within it relating to

local government when seeking to identify review topics. Whilst detail is still emerging about how the financial savings required by local government are to be distributed across service areas, scrutiny committees will need to take account of the information announced to date to help inform their review selection. It will be important to ensure that scrutiny committees are kept up to date with the emerging picture for Local Government.

- 3.4 The BITE Strategy is a commitment of significant resources to deliver business improvement and efficiency across the council and to deal with the council's medium term financial strategy. Scrutiny reviews also absorb significant resources from the Policy & Performance team within the Chief Executive's Directorate, as well as within the service areas that are engaged with each scrutiny review.
- 3.5 In order to ensure the most efficient use of resources, it is important that any scrutiny reviews undertaken this year do not duplicate/cut across services that are undergoing systems thinking interventions. It is also possible that the scoping exercises that are to be undertaken shortly may identify issues that would merit scrutiny involvement in subsequent stages of the systems thinking route and the opportunity exists to engage scrutiny committees in the BITE Strategy work.
- 3.6 The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on 15 June agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair of Scrutiny Committees should meet with the relevant Corporate Director to consider the best way forward to identify scrutiny review topics having regard to the BITE strategy and the need to promote best value and efficiency. The outcomes of these meetings will be reported verbally at the Committee meeting.
- 3.7 Once the outcome of the scoping work being undertaken in June /July is known this will be reported to scrutiny committees to further help inform the identification of scrutiny reviews that will add value to improving service delivery across the council.
- 3.8 It should be noted that the provisions set out above will not affect the potential issues for scrutiny review already identified by the Health Scrutiny Committee. At its meeting in June, the Committee identified the following potential issues for further consideration:
  - Motor-neuron disease / Parkinson's Disease – availability, accessibility and uptake of support and care packages
  - Epilepsy – availability, accessibility and uptake of support for those diagnosed with the condition and their families (including NHS and voluntary provision)
  - Community cultures and the impact on public health – suggestion by the Director of Public Health

These issues are outside the scope of the BITE programme and will therefore not duplicate or cut across services undergoing BITE intervention.

The Health Scrutiny Committee may, however, at a later date wish to engage with BITE strategy work if appropriate.

- 3.9 In relation to wider consultation with scrutiny committees on the priorities and medium term financial strategy, the scrutiny Co-ordination Committee supported a further process for the committees during the autumn cycle to consider any outcomes of the BITE programme including any further consideration of priorities. By this stage the Council should be operating in a climate of more information on the financial picture and this will no doubt require further consideration of our medium term financial strategy for 2011 onwards. The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee will again drive this process and collectively report back to the Executive.

#### **4.0 Recommendation**

- 4.1 Members are requested to consider the process to be followed for identifying scrutiny review topics for the current municipal year and how scrutiny activity can align with any of the BITE service reviews..

#### **Further information**

To discuss this report or for further information please contact Steve Callender telephone number 0161 474 3184 or e-mail [steve.callender@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:steve.callender@stockport.gov.uk)

**Area Committee Suggested Review Topics**

The following issues were suggested as potential scrutiny review topics for this Scrutiny Committee by Area Committees:

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Area Committee</b>
The provision of new stroke treatment in Greater Manchester, which is being administered by Stepping Hill Hospital	Cheadle

