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**To**  
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

8th October, 2008

**Subject**  
Scrutiny Work Programme: 2008/2009

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### 1 Purpose of the Note

To review the Scrutiny work programme for October to December 2008.

### 2 Recommendations

To note issues identified for inclusion in the work programme during this period and to consider how they should be managed.

### 3 Information/Background

At the start of the year, a number of issues were identified for inclusion in the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee work programme for which dates were not allocated because they were subject to other national and local timescales. Some of these timescales have now become clearer and at its meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> September the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee agreed that it would be helpful to consider how best to manage these issues relating to the Coventry Partnership, Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement, Comprehensive Area Assessment, Cabinet Portfolio Plans and the Household Survey.

This paper provides some background and context to these issues which will be the subject of a more detailed presentation and discussion at the meeting.

#### 3a Coventry Partnership and the Sustainable Community Strategy

##### ***Background***

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act introduces a number of changes to strengthen the way Overview and Scrutiny operates in local government. These include provision for requiring external partners to supply information to Overview and Scrutiny Committees and, where an Overview and Scrutiny Committee has made a report or recommendations relating to any partner involved in delivering Local Area Agreement targets, for requiring those partners to "have regard to the report or recommendation in exercising their functions". Government has been consulting on how these arrangements should be introduced and guidance is expected later in the year.

***Issues for Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:***

The Coventry Partnership is about to review both its own structures and progress against the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement. The completion of this work will provide a helpful opportunity for the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to consider how best the new statutory arrangements might operate in Coventry and what preparation is required to ensure that they work effectively. While scrutiny of health partners and issues has been in place for some years in Coventry and will provide valuable experience, the new arrangements will extend this much more widely.

**3b Local Area Agreement**

***Background***

This was agreed by Council in May and formally launched by Government in July. Over the summer action plans have been developed to identify the key steps that need to be taken to achieve the agreed targets and the first formal progress report will be considered by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> December.

***Issues for Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:***

When looking at the Scrutiny work programme for the year, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee discussed how best it should review performance against the Local Area Agreement Targets. The Committee agreed that it should receive the overall progress report and identify any issues that require more detailed scrutiny, either by the Committee itself or by the relevant Scrutiny Board. It is proposed that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee receive the report on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December, prior to its consideration by Cabinet with the aim of:

- Identifying any performance issues for further scrutiny work
- Making any recommendations to Cabinet

It is proposed that, in preparation for receiving the first progress report, a more detailed presentation and discussion take place at the 8<sup>th</sup> October meeting to brief Members on how action and progress is being monitored and to identify how the Committee would like to review the performance information.

### **3c Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)**

#### ***Background***

From April 2009 this new performance assessment framework for local government will be introduced, replacing the existing Comprehensive Performance Assessment arrangements under which the last set of star ratings and Direction of Travel statements will be published in February. The new arrangements will focus on the outcomes that councils and their partners are achieving and will be made up of an overall area assessment and specific organisational assessments for some public sector organisations, including local authorities. The organisational assessment will focus on how councils manage finance, govern the business, manage resources and manage performance.

#### ***Issues for Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:***

The Audit Commission and other inspectorates are still developing the assessment process and final details about how the framework will operate are expected to be published in December. However, some of the elements are becoming clearer and the Council is thinking about how it can prepare for the new arrangements. It is proposed that a short presentation on the developing process be included at the 8<sup>th</sup> October meeting to give Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee the opportunity to think about how it should approach the CAA and how Members should be engaged. There are links to the Sustainable Community strategy, Local Area Agreement and Coventry Partnership issues identified above as these will form important elements of the area assessment.

### **3d Cabinet Portfolio Plans**

#### ***Background***

The Cabinet Portfolio Plans were approved by Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> September. The format of the Plans has been revised from previous years so that they more clearly link to the delivery of the Corporate Plan and in particular, the new Local Area Agreement. They identify the portfolio responsibilities for each individual Cabinet Member and highlight the Cabinet Member's key priorities for the year ahead.

#### ***Issues for Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:***

It is proposed that the Leader of the Council be invited to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> November to introduce his plan and present those of the other Cabinet Members. To prepare for this meeting, it is proposed that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee review the Plans on 8<sup>th</sup> October and identify in advance any key issues on which they would like to question the Leader of the Council.

### **3e Coventry Partnership Household Survey 2007/08**

#### ***Background***

The results from the fifth household survey are now available. The information collected highlights a range of quality of life issues in Coventry and identifies continuing or emerging issues of concern. As part of its action plan for the year, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee identified the importance of making sure that Scrutiny work takes account of, and reflects the priorities and concerns of, local people both directly and by maximising the use of existing research and consultation. The Household Survey is a key resource for doing this.

#### ***Issues for Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:***

It is proposed that a presentation on the main findings be given to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> October with the aims of:

- ensuring that information from the survey contributes to issues already identified in the work programmes of Scrutiny Boards
- ensuring that Members of the Committee are aware of any issues arising from the survey that could help inform their consideration of the first progress report on the Local Area Agreement performance indicators
- identifying any other issues for that should be considered for inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme

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