

At a meeting of the SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on THURSDAY, 14TH MARCH, 2013 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Tate in the Chair

Councillors Bonallie, Francis, Howe, T. Martin, Shattock and N. Wright.

Also Present:-

Councillor Blackburn, Portfolio Holder for City Services

Councillor H. Trueman, Deputy Leader of the Council

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and they introduced themselves.

Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Errington.

Minutes of the Last Ordinary Meeting of the Committee held on 14th February, 2013

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last ordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 14th February, 2013 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)

Councillors Francis and Shattock made open declarations in relation to being Magistrates.

Scrutiny Policy Reviews 2012/13: Response from Cabinet – 13 February 2013

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide feedback from the Cabinet meeting held on 13 February 2013, regarding two of six of the first round of scrutiny policy reviews undertaken by scrutiny in 2012/13.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members of the Cabinet had been invited to attend for this item of business to provide feedback following Cabinet's consideration of, and decisions in relation to, each of the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations as follows:-

Scrutiny Panel	Policy Review	Portfolio Holder
City Services	Tell Us Once for Bereavement	Cllr Blackburn
Responsive Services and Customer Care	Reducing Reoffending	Cllr H. Trueman

In relation to the policy review on 'Tell Us Once for Bereavement', Councillor Blackburn advised in relation to other development areas, that the possibility of extending the scope to include Nexus as an end user was being considered so that families did not receive a bus pass for a family member who had passed away causing them upset and distress.

Members of the Committee welcomed news of this development.

Councillor H. Trueman provided a comprehensive feedback account of the work undertaken on the policy review on Reducing Reoffending.

Members of the Cabinet thanked the Committee for the opportunity to attend the meeting, provide feedback and answer questions asked by Members of the Scrutiny Committee. Once they had presented their feedback and answered questions they left the meeting.

The Chairman having thanked the Cabinet Members for their attendance it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the proposed actions detailed within each of the Action Plans appended to the report at appendices 1 and 2 and the information brought out during the discussion be noted; and
- (ii) each of the action plans be referred to the relevant scrutiny panels for further consideration.

Variation of Agenda

The Chairman proposed and it was agreed that items 6 and 7 'Safer Sunderland Partnership – Key Achievements 2012/13 and Strategic Priorities 2013/14' and 'Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner Update' be considered next on the agenda in sequence as a courtesy to Councillor H. Trueman, who was attending the meeting to present the reports to the Scrutiny Committee.

Safer Sunderland Partnership – Key Achievements 2012/13 and Strategic Priorities 2013/14

The Associate Policy Lead for Community Safety submitted a report (copy circulated) detailing for Members' information some of the Safer Sunderland Partnership's (SSP) key achievements in delivering the Safer Sunderland Strategy during the last year 2012/13 and highlighting the key strategic priorities for the SSP for the year ahead in 2013/14.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr Stuart Douglass, Lead Policy Officer for Community Safety briefed the Committee on the report highlighting the two key strategic priorities the SSP had agreed to focus on for 2013/14 which were:-

1. Reduce crime and disorder and improve feelings of safety.
2. Prevent and reduce harm to our most vulnerable people and places.

Mr Douglass also drew attention to the eight issues/work areas within the headline priorities for 2013/14 and beyond detailed in paragraph 2.2 of the report.

In response to Councillor Shattock, Mr Douglass advised that the film developed to raise issues around abuse in teenage relationships had been very effective and that those having seen the film had commented that they would be more likely to seek advice and support if they came across an issue of abuse in a teenage relationship. He added that the teaching materials to support teachers had been piloted in 5 schools, minor adjustments would be made to the materials and then they would be rolled out to all schools.

In response to the concerns raised by Councillors Howe and Shattock, he advised that ARCH, the network of organisations working together to help support victims of hate incidents and to take action against the suspects where possible, now covered disability hate incidents.

Councillor H. Trueman, Deputy Leader of the Council commented that one of the priorities of the new Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, Vera Baird QC was to provide victim led training to police officers so that the victim's experience was improved and ensure they were given support and understanding.

In response to the Chairman, Councillor Trueman reported that a further two month's funding had been secured for the Mobile Treatment Unit and it was hoped that other funding could be secured as a result of a robust business plan.

In relation to the campaign for a minimum unit price for alcohol, Mr Douglass advised that the results of the Government's consultation on the national alcohol strategy were still awaited.

Full consideration having been given to the report it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the information contained in appendix 1 be noted and that a report on key achievements in delivering the strategic priorities at the end of 2013/14 be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner Update

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) providing an update to the Committee on the emerging relationship with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor H. Trueman, Deputy Leader of the Council briefed the Committee on the meetings held to date and those that were planned, with the Commissioner and her Office regarding future funding arrangements and also in respect of the implications for the Authority as a result of the reduction in the Community Safety Fund allocation. This had been reduced by the Home Office for 2013/14 by around 17% from current year levels, the details of which were set out in paragraph 3 of the report together with the changes to the proposed funding arrangements.

Full consideration having been given to the report and the Chairman having thanked the Deputy Leader for his attendance, it was;-

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the content of the report in relation to the emerging relationship and communication with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner be received and noted; and
- (ii) regular updates be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee.

Reference from Cabinet - 13 March 2013 – Sunderland City Council: Local Development Framework : Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (copy circulated), seeking the advice and consideration of the Committee on a report considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 13th March, 2013, seeking approval of the Sunderland Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options for public consultation.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Neil Cole, Lead Policy Officer for Planning, Strategy, Policy and Performance Management briefed the Committee on the background to the Core Strategy highlighting that it will sit at the heart of the City's development planning framework and set out the overarching strategic planning framework for the development of the city for the next 20 years drawing from other strategies of the city council (such as the Sunderland Strategy and Economic Masterplan) and those of other organisations.

Mr Cole drew the Committee's attention to the next steps in terms of the Revised Preferred Options report which were detailed in paragraph 9 of the report, highlighting the plans to go out to public consultation at the beginning of May and the proposed arrangements in order to carry out public consultation most effectively, which included consulting with the Council's Area Committees, Area Boards and holding consultation events and public meetings in public buildings.

Members welcomed the opportunity to comment on the results of the consultation exercise as part of and following the public consultation process.

The Chairman thanked Mr Cole for his attendance, and it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the Council be advised that the Scrutiny Committee supported the Cabinet recommendation to recommend the Council to approve the Sunderland Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options (including the Sustainability Appraisal Report) for the purposes of public consultation and as a material

consideration in assessing planning applications, pending its finalisation following public consultation and to authorise the Deputy Chief Executive to make any required amendments to the Sunderland Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options (including the Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment Reports) as necessary, prior to its publication.

Future Library Services

The Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated)

- (i) providing Members with an overview of library services in Sunderland;
- (ii) outlining the proposed Vision for Future Library Services;
- (iii) detailing the consultation and engagement programme to inform the future offer; and
- (iv) seeking the views of the Scrutiny Committee on the proposed Vision.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Julie Gray, Head of Community Services briefed the Committee on the report highlighting the proposed vision for future library services detailed in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

In response to Members, Ms Gray advised the Committee of the reasons behind the proposals for the refocusing of the Library Service and the aims of the review, which were to increase overall access to the service, embrace modern technological and e-based service developments and incorporate them in the service offer, whilst make efficiency savings and reducing costs of the service.

Ms Gray drew attention to the detail of the consultation process to ascertain stakeholders' views including key milestones within the two-stage consultation plan set out at paragraph 5 of the report.

Full consideration having been given to the report, the Chairman thanked Ms Gray for her attendance and it was:-

6. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the proposed Vision for Future Library Services in Sunderland be approved for consultation; and
- (ii) a report providing the results of the consultation on the Vision of the new Library Service, the proposals for the future service model and proposed approach to be submitted for consideration to an extraordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to be held in May 2013, prior to submission of the final proposals to Cabinet.

Notice of Key Decisions

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28 day period from 12 February 2013.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman asked any Members having issues to raise or requiring further detail on any of the items included in the notice, to contact the Scrutiny Co-ordinator, Helen Lancaster for initial assistance.

7. RESOLVED that the Notice of Key Decisions as detailed above be received and noted.

Annual Work Programme 2012/13

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) attaching for Members' information, the work programme for the Committee's work during the 2012/13 council year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Helen Lancaster, Scrutiny Coordinator, advised that arrangements were being made for an extraordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 16th April to consider feedback following Cabinet's consideration of, and decisions taken in relation to the Scrutiny Panels' recommendations on the Policy Reviews they had undertaken. In addition, the ordinary meeting of the Committee scheduled for 18th April had been postponed to 25th April and a further extraordinary meeting to be held in May to provide feedback on the proposed changes to the library service, as discussed earlier in the meeting, prior to it being considered by Cabinet on 16th May.

8. RESOLVED that the information contained in the work programme and detailed above be received and noted.

Lead Scrutiny Member Update: March 2013

The Lead Scrutiny Members submitted a joint report (copy circulated) providing an update to the Scrutiny Committee regarding the work of each of the six Lead Scrutiny Members and supporting Panels.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman informed Members of the Health Development Session and Regional Scrutiny Network meeting being held on Friday 22nd March in the Council Chamber advising that all Members were welcome to attend.

The Committee received an update from those Lead Scrutiny Members present on the work being carried out by the Scrutiny Panels under their purview.

Councillor Francis advised that Members of the Children's Services Panel were keen to consider the Ofsted report in respect of Oxclose Primary School.

Following some discussion it was agreed that the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillor Francis would give some initial consideration to the above report and, if considered appropriate, to refer the report to the appropriate Scrutiny Panel for consideration.

At this juncture the Chairman requested that all chairs of the Scrutiny Panels advise him if they were unable to attend a Panel meeting so that appropriate arrangements could be made for the Panel meetings to be chaired by another Member.

Ms Helen Lancaster, Scrutiny Coordinator highlighted the Responsive Services and Customer Care Panel meeting being held on 19th March at 5.30 pm with Vera Baird QC, the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner to discuss the future plans of the Commissioner in respect of domestic violence across the wider Northumbria force area and advised that the invitation to attend had been extended to all Scrutiny Committee Members.

Full consideration having been given to the report it was:-

9. RESOLVED that the update of the Lead Scrutiny Members and the information detailed above, be received and noted.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

(Signed) R.D. TATE,
Chairman.