

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME AND POLICY REVIEW 2011-12

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 For Members to determine the Annual Work Programme for the Scrutiny Committee during 2011-12, including the main theme for a detailed policy review.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Committee is responsible for setting its own work programme within the following remit:

General Scope: To consider issues relating to children and young people, and learning for all ages

Remit: Children & Young People's Plan Outcomes: Be Healthy; Stay Safe; Enjoy and Achieve; Positive Contribution; and Achieve Economic Well-Being, Adult Learning Plan, Libraries and Youth Justice Plan.

- 2.2 The City Council's Scrutiny Committees are aligned to the relevant priorities of the Sunderland Strategy. This allows each Scrutiny Committee to focus on the priority areas and targets in the Sunderland Strategy and for the work of all Scrutiny Committees to consistently address those areas of performance requiring detailed examination.

- 2.3 This approach, linked to strategic priorities, is proposed to allow a clear themed focus on the outcomes for the people of Sunderland, and allow for cross-cutting examination of issues, with potential for linking areas of knowledge and expertise that would not ordinarily be brought together, so increasing the likelihood of the committees identifying novel approaches and solutions to the issues they consider.

- 2.4 The most relevant Sunderland Strategic priority for this committee is:

Learning City: To create a place with a thriving learning culture where everyone can be involved in learning in a cohesive and inclusive city that is committed to social justice, equality and prosperity, where creativity flourishes and where individuals can have all they need to thrive in the global economy.

2.5 All Scrutiny Committees will take a role in the scrutiny of partnership and area issues and have a role in engaging with partners, external scrutiny, community and public engagement, engaging with media and area scrutiny.

3. Policy Review

3.1 Policy review is the process of maintaining an overview of council policies and will usually examine whether the City Council and its partners intended policy outcomes have been achieved. The process will also explore issues such as the perspective of residents affected by the policy.

3.2 Policy reviews are project planned with appropriate methodology applied to investigate the chosen topic. This may include meetings, site visits, surveys, public meetings or analysis of comparative practice in other local authorities.

3.3 Previous reviews carried out by this Scrutiny Committee have included Learning at Work; the role of apprenticeships in tackling NEETs, Home to school transport policy in relation to after school clubs, Child & Family Support Service – an overview, possible development of opportunities for 12 – 18 year olds and the facilities currently available on the north side of the city for after school activities, Academy Schools, Teaching and take up of Modern Foreign Languages in secondary schools. All previous reviews are available at:-
<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3420>

3.4 Following the selection of a topic for review, the Committee will receive a report setting out a possible approach to the review. This will include the terms of reference, definitions, links to corporate goals, partnerships, the national and local context, and proposals for gathering evidence.

3.5 The shortlist of topics for 2011-12 is listed below. The Committee is recommended to select one topic from this shortlist, in no particular order, for an in-depth review. The list includes topics suggested as priorities at the discussions between members, officers and partners at the Annual Scrutiny Conference on 19 May 2011.

Suggested Topics for Policy Review		
	Brief Description	Objective
1.	Teenage Pregnancy	Despite the number of interventions put into place around teenage conception rates the situation remains relatively unchanged. The review could look into a number of possible issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why, despite such interventions, is there little

		<p>impact on the teenage conception rate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we make improvements to services? • Is there a need for a more coordinated approach between the Council, Health Services, stakeholders and other providers? • Do services/resources adequately meet the needs of the young people they are designed for? • What are the views of young people? • What are the longer term impacts for young mums and young dads? • What are the outcomes for the children of young parents? • Can we learn from practices employed in other parts of the country or Europe? <p><i>Links: Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve</i></p>
2.	Corporate Parent	<p>Sunderland City Council in its role as a corporate parent has a responsibility to the looked after children within the city. The review could look at a number of issues around both the educational attainment in looked after children and the transitional arrangements from local authority care at 19 and the support provided to 19-24 year olds including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Sunderland as a corporate parent ensure that those young people who are in care are afforded the same opportunities to succeed? • What partnership arrangements exist and what are the experiences of 19-24 year olds leaving local authority care? • How does the corporate parent role help the looked after children in the city and how does this role contribute to the life chances and opportunities for this group? <p><i>Links: Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Achieve Economic Wellbeing</i></p>
3.	Early Intervention	<p>To look at the restructured Integrated Early Intervention Model. The review could explore a number of issues related to delivering an improvement of outcomes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do families get the services they need, when they need them? • Why do some families not use the services available? How do families get help when they need it? • Can the Council learn from previous delivery models and services offered, what were the successes and failures? • Do we give the services that families really need or services that, as a council, we believe they need?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at Surestart and how targeting the early years could help alleviate later life problems. • Is there a cyclical nature to the issue, are interventions being used by the next generations of the same families? • How will the changing funding landscape impact on intervention resources? <p><i>Links: Stay Safe, Be Healthy</i></p>
4.	Educational Performance	<p>Attainment at Key Stages 1 & 2 continues to be a challenge in some places within the city. Performance in these areas has over the last couple of years remained constant. The review could look at intervention strategies at both Key Stages and how this supports educational attainment including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we improve the attainment in these specific groups? • How do intervention strategies work? • What is the relationship between schools and the School Improvement Service? • What will be the effect of the English Baccalaureate model on performance? • How will the emphasis shift to academic pathways affect performance? • What is the future for vocational courses within schools and how will this impact on pupils? • How do we raise the attainment bar for all, not just those who present a challenge? <p><i>Links: Enjoy and Achieve, Positive Contribution, Achieve Economic Wellbeing</i></p>
5.	New Relationship with Schools	<p>With the new Education Bill comes a number of issues and has fundamental implications for the relationship between schools and the local authority. The bill expects local authorities to move towards a more commission based role rather than the more traditional provider role.</p> <p><i>Links: Enjoy and Achieve, Positive Contribution, Achieve Economic Wellbeing</i></p>

4. Work Programme

- 4.1 A draft work programme for 2011-12 is attached as Appendix A. The work programme will be populated with items agreed by members at this meeting and submitted to the July meeting.

4.2 The work programme can be amended during the year. Any member of the Committee can add an item of business to an agenda (see Protocol 1 Overview & Scrutiny Handbook).

5. Conclusion & Recommendation

5.1 The Committee is asked to

(a) Consider the draft annual Work Programme for 2011-12 and indicate any additions or amendments

(b) Consider the list of suggestions for policy review and determine one topic for review.

5.2 Subject to any amendment at this meeting, the work programme will be submitted to the Management Scrutiny Committee in its coordinating role.

6 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: Nigel Cummings 0191 561 1006
Nigel.cummings@sunderland.gov.uk