

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 JUNE 2010

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME AND POLICY REVIEW 2010-11

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 For Members to determine the Annual Work Programme for the Scrutiny Committee during 2010-11, 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 scope:

General Scope: To consider issues relating to sustainability and key city projects, and maintain an overview of each of the Sunderland Partnership's cross cutting priorities.

Remit: Sustainability, Creating Inclusive Communities, Housing, Housing Strategy, Private Housing, Housing Associations, Major Projects, Culture, Art Development, Museums, Heritage.

- 2.2 The Council's Scrutiny Committees are aligned to the relevant priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy – the Sunderland Strategy. This allows each Scrutiny Committee to focus on the priority areas and targets in the Sunderland Strategy and Local Area Agreement (LAA) and for the work of all Scrutiny Committees to consistently address those areas of performance requiring detailed examination.
- 2.3 This approach allows a clear themed focus on the outcomes for the people of Sunderland, and allows 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 Strategy priority for this committee is:

To ensure that Sunderland becomes a clean, green city with a strong culture of sustainability, protecting and nurturing both its built heritage and future development and ensuring that both the built and natural environments will be welcoming, accessible, attractive and of high quality.

- 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, and 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 Council and its partners intended policy outcomes have been achieved. The process will also explore issues such as the service user's perspective.
- 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. All previous reviews are available at <http://cityweb/directorates/chief-executive/scrutiny/scrutinyhome.shtm>
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 The shortlist of topics for 2010-11 is listed below. The Committee is recommended to select one topic from this shortlist for an in depth review. The list includes all topics suggested by Members from the discussions held at the Scrutiny Conference on 20th May 2010.

Policy Review Proposals	
Low carbon economy	To investigate the local approach to the Green agenda and explore how well sustainability is embedded within the Council and the Sustainable Community Strategy. To examine the measures being taken by our partners in order to identify and share best practice.
City Heritage	To investigate the city's heritage and explore ways to protect it. To ensure proper stewardship of the city's diverse historic environment and consider what measures can be taken to protect our built environment and heritage. To monitor progress on the city's world heritage bid.
Accessibility of Leisure and Sports Facilities	To review the level of service provision for people using Council leisure facilities. To consider how far these facilities are fully accessible to everyone regardless of age, gender, faith, ability and social and economic

	deprivation.
Sustainability of the City Centre	To investigate the level of sustainability of the city centre and the measures that would contribute to its long term sustainability including employment opportunities, environmental improvements and attractive housing.
Art and Culture	To investigate ways in which art and culture can attract visitors to the city and contribute in securing the sustainable development of the city.
Availability of Mortgages	To review the current availability of mortgages to residents in the city and explore the potential of new ways for people to access funding.
Empty Property	To examine the work being undertaken to reduce the number of empty properties in the city and bring long term empty properties back into use. To consider what action is being taken to ensure that early intervention prevents empty properties causing problems in neighbourhoods.
Sustainable Communities	To explore the features of a sustainable community and investigate what progress is being made to become a sustainable community. How can we ensure that our communities are mixed, safe, socially inclusive and sensitive to the local environment.
Play and Urban Games Strategy	To review the implementation of previous work of the former Culture and Leisure Review Committee on the Play and Urban Games Strategy 2007-2012. To monitor and review progress on the Strategy and consider future directions

4. Work Programme

- 4.1 A draft work programme for 2010-11 with items already scheduled is attached as Appendix A.
- 4.2 The work programme can be amended during the year and 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 2010-11 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

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