

RESPONSIVE SERVICES AND CUSTOMER CARE SCRUTINY PANEL

POLICY REVIEW 2012/13: REDUCING RE-OFFENDING – SCOPE

19 JULY 2011

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to put forward proposals and seek agreement from the Panel in relation to the forthcoming policy review into reducing re-offending in Sunderland.

2. Background

- 2.1 As the Panel will be aware, a new scrutiny operating commissioning model has been introduced for the new 2012/13 Municipal Year. The newly established Scrutiny Committee will act as the overarching Committee with responsibility for all matters in relation to the improvement, delivery and performance of the scrutiny function. Within these revised scrutiny arrangements the Scrutiny Committee will not undertake a policy review of its own. Instead the Scrutiny Committee will commission the Lead Scrutiny Members and respective scrutiny panels to undertake two short and focused (or 'spotlight') policy reviews during 2012/13.
- 2.2 The Annual Scrutiny Conference was held at the Quayside Exchange on 17 May 2012. During the discussions a number of viable policy reviews were formulated for discussion by members of the Panel. At its meeting on 14 June 2012, following discussions regarding the Annual Work Programme, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to commission the Reducing Re-offending policy review to the Responsive Services and Customer Care Lead Scrutiny Member and supporting Panel.

3. The Scrutiny Review Process

- 3.1 Scrutiny reviews will carry out a number of stages in undertaking and completing a review. The stages broadly are:

Stage 1 Scope The initial stage of the review identifies the background, issues, potential outcomes and timetable for the review.

Stage 2 Investigate The Committee gathers evidence using a variety of tools and techniques and arranges visits where appropriate.

Stage 3 Analyse The key trends and issues are highlighted from the evidence gathered by the Committee.

Stage 4 Clarify	The Committee discusses and identifies the principal messages of the review from the work undertaken.
Stage 5 Recommend	The Committee formulates and agrees realistic recommendations.
Stage 6 Report	Draft and final reports are prepared based on the evidence, findings and recommendations.
Stage 7 Monitor	The Committee monitors recommendations on a regularly agreed basis.

4. Overall Aim of the Scrutiny Policy Review

- 4.1 To consider three of the Safer Sunderland Partnership's key priorities for reducing re-offending;
- (i) The city's Integrated Offender Management Unit (IOM);
 - (ii) Offender support in custody and the initial transition into the community; and
 - (iii) Tackling accommodation issues for offenders.

5. Proposed Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Policy Review

- 5.1 The Terms of Reference for the policy review are proposed:-
- (a) To understand the importance of reducing re-offending in the city, how this contributes to the council's corporate outcomes framework and how national policy and legislation is translated to a local level;
 - (b) To examine the role and responsibilities of the local authority and partners in regard to reducing re-offending;
 - (c) To consider the role of the Integrated Offender Management Unit in the city and measuring progress to date against expected outcomes;
 - (d) To investigate the Safer Sunderland Partnership's key priority to reduce re-offending by working in partnership to reduce the number of short term prisoners and bridge the gap between custody and the community; and
 - (e) To investigate the challenges and opportunities in regard to Pathway 1 of the Nine Pathways to Reducing Re-offending; tackling accommodation issues.

6. Potential Areas of Enquiry and Sources of Evidence

6.1 The Scrutiny Panel can invite or visit a variety of key stakeholders and interested parties to provide written or oral evidence in order that a balanced and focused range of recommendations can be formulated. A list of potential witnesses, though not exhaustive, is included for member's information:

Evidence	Method
<p>Setting the Scene</p> <p><i>(To give a general overview of the approaches to reducing re-offending locally, the nine pathways to reducing re-offending and provide an update on relevant national policy and legislation and its impact locally.)</i></p>	Panel meeting
<p>Integrated Offender Management Unit</p> <p><i>(Consider the role of the Integrated Offender Management Unit in the city and establish progress to date against expected outcomes)</i></p>	Visit to the IOM
<p>Support in Custody and the Community for Offenders</p> <p><i>(Investigate the Safer Sunderland Partnership's key priority to reduce re-offending by working in partnership to reduce the number of short term prisoners and bridge the gap between custody and the community)</i></p>	Visit to HMP Northumbria Prison
<p>Pathway 1: Accommodation</p> <p><i>(Consider the challenges and opportunities to providing accommodation for offenders)</i></p>	Panel Meeting(s)

6.2 Where Policy Reviews look at cross-cutting issues, opportunities may arise to undertake joint working as endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee.

6.3 Community engagement plays a crucial role in the scrutiny process. Consideration will be given to how involvement can be structured in a way that the Panel encourages those views. If felt appropriate the Panel is able to co-opt an additional member to the Committee for the duration of the policy review. Regulations with regard to the co-opting of additional members can be found in the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook.

6.4 In addition, diversity issues have been considered in the background research for this enquiry under the Equality Standards for Local Government. As such the views of local diversity groups will be sought throughout the inquiry where felt appropriate and time allows. Consequently, consideration has been given as to how the views of people from minority communities of interest or heritage, which may not be gathered through the usual community engagement routes, can be included over the course of the inquiry.

7. Funding from the Dedicated Overview and Scrutiny Budget

- 7.1 Consideration has been given, through the background research for this scoping report of the need to use funding from the Scrutiny Committee's dedicated Overview and Scrutiny budget to aid the enquiry.
- 7.2 At this stage it is suggested that funding may be necessary to support the following activities:
- (a) Key witnesses;
 - (b) Engagement with voluntary and statutory organisations;
 - (c) Activities outside of the Civic Centre (as necessary) to deliver effective scrutiny; and
 - (d) Any other activity deemed necessary to the Panel to assist in the policy review.
- 7.3 Should the Scrutiny Lead Member and Panel require funding from the Scrutiny Committee's dedicated budget, this should be brought before the Scrutiny Committee at the next available meeting for consideration, under the Lead Scrutiny Member Update.

8. Proposed Timetable of the Scrutiny Investigation

- 8.1 The following timetable for the policy review is proposed:

Setting the Scene – July 2012

Evidence Gathering - September – December 2012

Consideration of Draft Final Report - December 2012

Consideration of Final Report by the Scrutiny Committee - January 2013

Consideration of Final Report by the Cabinet/Council- February/March 2013 (Tentative date)

- 8.2 As the review progresses the Panel may deem it necessary to revisit the policy review schedule to ensure the evidence gathered fully addresses the terms of reference, taking into account the need to produce focused and robust conclusions at the end of the review period.

9. Conclusion and Next Steps

- 9.1 Members are asked to agree the scope of the policy review and the schedule of evidence gathering.

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