

POLICY DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW 2011/12: PROGRESS ON REVIEWS

Report of the Chief Executive

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the progress in relation to the two policy reviews being undertaken by the Management Scrutiny Committee into self regulation and illegal money lending respectively.

2. Background

- 2.1 Initial scoping documents were presented to the Committee on the 14th July 2011 which set out proposed terms of reference for each of the reviews. At its meeting on 15th September, 2011 the Committee considered scene setting reports for both reviews into self regulation (now titled Demonstrating Local Accountability: A look at the emerging national Self Regulation Framework and implications for the Council) and illegal money lending (now titled At What Cost: The Effects of High-Cost Credit and Illegal Loan Sharks on Local Communities).

3. Demonstrating Local Accountability: Policy Review - Update

- 3.1 The first workshop into Self Regulation took place on Monday 31st October 2011 and was aimed at highlighting some of the tools that have been and continue to be developed around self regulation, as well as looking at the changes to inspection arrangements in key service areas. Graham King, Health, Housing and Adult Services and Meg Boustead, Children's Services, had been invited to attend and provide a brief overview of the inspection and assessment process in their respective service areas.

Self Regulation in Social Care

- 3.2 The previous regime of inspection included the National Performance Assessment Framework which was carried out annually by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The future direction of inspection is based around sector led improvement as follows:

- Nationally led by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), the Local Government Group (LGG) and CQC;
- Co-ordinated through Promoting Excellence in Councils' Adult Social Care Programme Board;
- A regional approach developed by NE ADASS.

- 3.3 The regional approach has four main components:

1. Develop a consistent approach to performance management arrangements.
2. Provide support to those councils formerly judged as 'Adequate'.
3. Develop a regional programme of service development.

4. Start a regionally funded pilot of proposed arrangements.
- 3.4 The new outcomes framework for adult social care will be much more service user focused, with a measure of outcomes that is more person centred. A buddy arrangement with other councils in the North East will share out the work of peer reviews.
- 3.5 Members were also informed that the development of a Local Account was ongoing with discussions around the exact content of such an account. Local accounts are designed to build on the work that councils are already doing in engaging with its public and consumers around priorities and outcomes. There is the potential for local accounts to become a key accountability mechanism to the public and a useful way of informing self improvement activity locally. The account is mandatory from 2012/13. It was also noted that the Annual Account would be signed off by the relevant scrutiny committee.

Self Regulation in Children's Safeguarding

- 3.6 The current Ofsted inspection process was highlighted and in particular the annual unannounced inspection which lasts approximately 2.5 days. It was noted that Children's Services had been inspected on Tuesday 25 October 2011. Running in parallel with this was the announced inspection which was more detailed and lasts for up to 2 weeks. Ofsted were currently consulting on a new inspection framework which would come into operation next year and combine these 2 inspections together.
- 3.7 Children's Services were preparing for a peer review of the safeguarding service. In preparing for the review an honest and frank self assessment was to be completed. Also with a peer review the service can target areas for review which can help develop new or different approaches to service operation.
- 3.8 It was noted that feedback from this peer review would be reported back to one of the future programmed scrutiny workshops on self regulation.

Self Regulation Resources

- 3.9 A number of resource tools were available or under development for local authorities to use and assist in the development and implementation of self regulation within organisations. These included:

Taking the Lead (LGA) – The Local Government Groups approach to self regulation in the public sector aimed at helping councils strengthen their accountability;

Seven Point Offer (LGA) – These include Peer Challenge, Peer Support, Knowledge Hub, Data and Transparency, Leadership Support and Learning & Support Networks; and,

LG Inform (LGA) – This is a performance management tool online that provides performance information against comparators of the researcher's choice. This has the potential to be a powerful tool facilitating the creation of 'bespoke' performance reports.

3.10 The complete notes from this workshop are attached as **Appendix 1** of this report.

4. At What Cost? : Policy Review - Update

4.1 The official launch of the Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) in Sunderland took place on Tuesday 8th November 2011 at the National Glass Centre. The event was attended by a number of key stakeholders from across the city with the aim of developing an action plan for the IMLT in Sunderland.

4.2 In attendance at the Management Committee Meeting held on Thursday 10th November 2011 was the Head of the Illegal Money Lending Team in England, Tony Quigley (TQ).

4.3 TQ provided a presentation for Members around the work of the IMLT, the practices of illegal money lenders and a number of case studies that the team had worked on.

4.4 TQ also made reference to the official launch of the Illegal Money Lending Team in Sunderland. A Stop Loan Sharks banner was going to be put up on one of the shops in Sunderland City Centre to promote the work of the Team. TQ also reported that trend analysis was a crucial part and to this end the Sunderland Mosaic System would assist the Team in terms of targeting support to neighbourhoods. The IMLT had found that certain characteristics were common to areas that were the location of loan shark activities. TQ also noted that the IMLT adopted and adapted to any emerging new trends.

4.5 In terms of reporting of IMLT activity it was noted that regional reports were produced and this would include any activities from Sunderland, there would also be regular contact with the Council's Trading Standards Officers to ensure effective communication.

4.6 Initiatives used to promote awareness of the support available to victims of Domestic Violence and of the publicity materials produced were highlighted including items such as memory sticks and lip gloss that provided details of where to get help, advice and support. TQ was particularly interested in the lip gloss idea and would be looking to incorporate this into the IMLT's publicity tools.

4.7 The timetable for this policy review is attached as **Appendix 2** of this report.

5. Next Steps

5.1 The second Self Regulation workshop is due to take place on Tuesday 13th December at 4pm in Committee Room 3. This workshop aims to look at one of the key accountability tools in peer challenge. The final two workshops will be arranged for January/February 2012.

5.2 A working group is take place in relation to the review into Illegal Money Lending and High Cost Credit on Thursday 15th December at 4pm, prior to the Management Scrutiny Committee meeting. Further focus groups and activities are being arranged in line with the policy review timetable.

6. Recommendations

6.1 That the information in the report is noted.

Background Papers

Management Scrutiny Committee Papers - Minutes

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