

**LEAD SCRUTINY MEMBER UPDATE: SEPTEMBER 2013**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE LEAD SCRUTINY MEMBERS**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Scrutiny Committee regarding the work of each of the six Lead Scrutiny Members and supporting Panels.

**2. SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBER UPDATE**

***Scrutiny Chair and Vice Chair (Cllrs David Tate and Norma Wright)***

- 2.1 On the 18 September, the Chair attended an event at the Marriott in Gateshead and was involved in the process of appointing a new Chair of the Board. The candidates each delivered a presentation and attendees were required to comment.
- 2.2 On 23 September the Chair and Vice Chair met with representatives of Healthwatch Sunderland. Healthwatch are a key partner of scrutiny in undertaking effective health scrutiny. It was agreed that Healthwatch would attend the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 7 November to provide an introduction and to discuss information sharing and working together in the most effective way.
- 2.3 On 26 September, the Chair attended the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) 'Call to Action' event which reflected on the challenges ahead in addressing health issues within reducing budgets. Attendees were asked to consider the CCG's priorities and give their views on the relevance and importance of these priorities to the health of the city.

***Children's Services (Cllr Debra Waller)***

- 2.4 The Panel has arranged a number of evidence gathering sessions that will take place over the coming months. The Panel has recently visited Highfield Community Primary school, which has banned packed lunches, and is developing relationships with the community to highlight the importance of a hot, nutritional meal for all pupils. In conversation with the Headteacher this was reinforced through the school's work around family learning, whereby the school holds cookery lessons with a 'party/celebration' at the end where the food eaten has been prepared and cooked by the parents. The Headteacher also informed Members that school results were very positive with pupils narrowing the gap and developing above the Sunderland average during their school life. Now while this cannot be simply attributed to a healthier diet or pupils eating a hot meal at lunchtime the Headteacher certainly believed that it contributed towards it through improved concentration and healthier, nourished pupils.

- 2.5 In forthcoming activities the Panel are to visit the Stay and Bake initiative which looks at teaching families to eat healthy and cook on a budget. As well as taking evidence from NHS child nutritionists and discussing with council officers the programmes in place in the city to tackle child obesity. The Children's Services Scrutiny Panel has also canvassed a number of local authorities around the country who have or are in the process of looking at ways to control the proliferation of fast food outlets in their areas as a way of tackling child obesity and obesity in general. Many local authorities are looking at planning laws to restrict the growth of fast food outlets near to schools.
- 2.6 The Panel is also to look at the issue of sexual exploitation and the work the council undertakes around this very sensitive issue and a meeting is to be arranged that will see officers and members coming together to discuss this in greater detail.

### ***City Services (Cllr Stephen Bonallie)***

- 2.7 The Panel met on 5 September 2013. The meeting focused on the Panel's review into licensing and alcohol, meeting with Sue Robinson from BALANCE and CI Jerry Pearson from the Police.
- 2.8 Members discussed the issues surrounding the proposed introduction of a minimum unit price for alcohol, the accessibility and effect of alcohol on our young people, the changing drinking habits of those visiting the city centre and the effect of alcohol on anti-social behaviour in city.
- 2.9 At the meeting, the Panel agreed to arrange a visit with the Police to view at first hand the effect of underage and anti- social drinking in the city and it is anticipated that the visit will take place during October.
- 2.10 The next meeting of the Panel is scheduled for 5 October 2013. The Panel will continue to take evidence in relation licensing and alcohol, with Lynne Thomas, Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) in attendance. Lynne will be accompanied by Jan Van Wagtendonk who is the SSCB Independent Chair and Linda Mason who is the Chair of the SSCB Legal, Policy and Procedures Sub Committee.
- 2.11 The Panel will also receive feedback on last year's policy review into Waste and Recycling in Sunderland: Approach to Resident Engagement.

### ***Health, Housing and Adult Services (Cllr Christine Shattock)***

- 2.12 The Health, Housing and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel is looking at supporting carers across the city and have a number of evidence gathering sessions arranged or being planned. The Panel visited the Carers Centre in Thompson Park in September, this provided Members with a real understanding of the work that is undertaken there. Members discussed a number of key issues with the staff and carers. It was useful

to hear from carers about their own experiences around the realisation of being a carer and this corroborated much of the evidence already gathered. Other issues raised during the visit revolved around recognition, early intervention and the wider engagement of employers across the city who may have employees with caring responsibilities. The Panel also met a young carer and have invited him to attend the expert jury day in December, which he has kindly accepted.

- 2.13 Forthcoming Panel activities include a visit to St Benedict's Hospice in October, which provides specialist palliative care to people in Sunderland. The Panel are also planning to hold an Expert Jury Day in December which will provide important evidence for the review and already the event will see representatives from the CCG, Age UK, NTW and Job Centre Plus providing expert opinion and perspective on the issue of Carers.

***Public Health, Wellness and Culture (Cllr George Howe)***

- 2.14 The Panel is pursuing a review of public engagement in the health service. A meeting was held on 10 September to take evidence from the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS).

- 2.15 NEAS described a very complex and sophisticated patient engagement mechanism and also explained how they have adapted their processes in light of new health arrangements from April 2013. For example, there are 12 HealthWatch organisations in their geographic area and they have formed a NE Forum to get together to discuss common issues. They also engage with established patient groups such as the CCG patient engagement forums. NEAS described their complaints mechanism and the sort of issues that might give rise to a complaint. Waiting for an ambulance is the top reason for a complaint and as a result of this a new clinical escalation policy has been introduced.

***Skills, Economy and Regeneration (Cllr Tom Martin)***

- 2.16 The Panel last met on 19 September 2013 to receive a presentation from officers of the Council on the impact of the Economic Masterplan in terms of the economic diversification of the city.

- 2.17 The Panel discussed the potential for diversification across the various themes across the Masterplan including Software and IT, the Creative Industries, the renewables industries emerging at the Port and financial and service industries within the city centre. The Panel highlighted the measures being undertaken to improve the overall infrastructure of the city including transport, communications and buildings that should all contribute to a broadening the economic base of the city. However, Members noted the on-going important of Nissan and the automotive industry to the economy of the city and the significant influence it will continue to have in the future.

- 2.18 The Panel also received feedback on the policy review into the delivery of Apprenticeships in the city following its approval by Cabinet.
- 2.19 The next meeting of the Panel will be held on 15 October at the Evolve Business Centre at Rainton Bridge. The meeting will provide the opportunity for Members to discuss the opportunities available with a number of small IT and Software Businesses based at the Centre.

### ***Responsive Services and Customer Care (Cllr Iain Kay)***

- 2.20 The Panel is pursuing a review of volunteering with a focus on unlocking capacity and met on 17 September to take evidence from Gentoo Living, Easington Lane Community Access Point and from Age UK.
- 2.21 Gentoo described their employee volunteering scheme and how they match employees to an appropriate opportunity. They are also involved in fundraising campaigns, work with charities and are trying to connect to other large businesses to develop larger pools of volunteers. Further development work is on-going to determine how voluntary capacity could further meet some of their customer needs.
- 2.22 It was clear that the presence of Gentoo in certain neighbourhoods complements grassroots projects in those areas and the ELCAP described how they have worked alongside Gentoo in the community to improve the community resources. Area funding has been used effectively to kick-start projects in the local area and this has had the effect of bringing on board the interest of partners whereby projects can be sustained.
- 2.23 Age UK described how they provide a range of opportunities for volunteers and explained the importance of volunteers recognising the responsibility they are taking on. Clear guidance and support is important when maintaining a pool of voluntary support.

## **3. CHANGES TO PANEL MEMBERSHIPS**

- 3.1 Non-executive Members have now been allocated to a scrutiny panel, membership of the panels has been decided in accordance with current political arrangements.
- 3.2 Scrutiny Panels are informal; therefore there is flexibility within the arrangements to revise Panel memberships at any point in the municipal year to reflect changes to Member capacity and other commitments.
- 3.3 There are no changes to report; therefore the complete membership of the Scrutiny Panels is attached for information and consideration as **Appendix 1** of this report.

## **4. DEDICATED SCRUTINY BUDGET**

4.1 A small budgetary provision of £15,000 per annum is available to the Scrutiny Committee and the supporting Panels to deliver the agreed Annual Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

4.2 As of 26 September 2013 the breakdown of the budget stood as follows:-

<b>Description</b>	<b>£</b>
Scrutiny Development	5,146.16
Member Development	2,275.09
Policy Review Development	0.00
<b>Total Expenditure to Date</b>	<b>7,421.25</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>15,000</b>
<b>Remaining Budget</b>	<b>7578.25</b>

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee notes and considers the update of the Lead Scrutiny Members and receives a further verbal update at the meeting.

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Scrutiny Committee Agenda and Papers – 11 July

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## APPENDIX 1

### MEMBERSHIP OF THE SIX SCRUTINY PANELS

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>City Services</b></p> <p>Scrutiny Lead Member: Cllr Stephen Bonallie</p> <p>Cllr Neville Padgett Cllr Michael Essl Cllr Stuart Porthouse Cllr Lynda Scanlan Cllr Steven Foster Cllr Amy Wilson Cllr Dianne Snowdon</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Health, Housing &amp; Adult Services</b></p> <p>Scrutiny Lead Member: Cllr Christine Shattock</p> <p>Cllr Jill Fletcher Cllr Ronny Davison Cllr Alan Emerson Cllr Rosalind Copeland Cllr Darryl Dixon Cllr Lisa Smiles Cllr Barbara McLennan Cllr Dorothy Trueman Cllr Mary Turton Cllr Gemma Taylor</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Children's Services</b></p> <p>Scrutiny Lead Member: Cllr Debra Waller</p> <p>Cllr Florence Anderson Cllr Linda Williams Cllr Doris MacKnight Cllr Anthony Farr Cllr Philip Tye Cllr Robert Oliver Cllr Bob Francis</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Skills, Economy &amp; Regeneration</b></p> <p>Scrutiny Lead Member: Cllr Tom Martin</p> <p>Cllr Bob Price Cllr Christine Marshall Cllr David Snowdon Cllr Denny Wilson Cllr Len Lauchlan Cllr Tom Wright Cllr Peter Wood</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Public Health, Wellness &amp; Culture</b></p> <p>Scrutiny Lead Member: Cllr George Howe</p> <p>Cllr Debra Waller Cllr Louise Farthing Cllr Fiona Miller Cllr Julia Jackson Cllr Rebecca Atkinson Cllr David Errington Cllr Paul Maddison</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Responsive Services &amp; Customer Care</b></p> <p>Scrutiny Lead Member: Cllr Iain Kay</p> <p>Cllr Bob Heron Cllr Betty Gibson Cllr Barry Curran Cllr Anne Lawson Cllr John Scott Cllr George Thompson Cllr John Wiper</p>

