

## (e) MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT

### REPORT OF CHAIR OF THE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform the Members of the Management Scrutiny Committee of the progress made to date by this Scrutiny Committee, as part of a six months progress report pilot.

#### 2. Progress of the Scrutiny Committee

- 2.1 Since the start of the Council year the Scrutiny Committee has:

- (a) Developed the Scrutiny Function's Links with External Partners - During recent months, significant work has been undertaken to develop the links between the City Council's scrutiny arrangements and its external partners, namely the Sunderland Partnership.

A protocol between the Sunderland Partnership and the Council's Scrutiny Committees was endorsed in September 2009. In line with good practice, the agreed protocol ensures that all partners and stakeholders share a common understanding of Scrutiny's aims by setting out the roles and responsibilities that relate to the parties concerned.

As a starting point to establishing an effective dialogue, **A 'Meet and Greet' Event** between partners of the Sunderland Partnership and Scrutiny Chairs/Vice Chairs is to be held on **2 December 2009, commencing at 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm the Mayor's Parlour**. Such event is being held in advance of the Annual Delivery Plans of the Delivery Partnerships being considered by the relevant Scrutiny Committee in February 2010, to ensure to ensure open and transparent accountability in the delivery of LAA targets etc.

- (b) Revisited the Councillor Call for Action Mechanism and considered proposals for the Introduction of a Selection Criteria for Dealing with Issues of Local Concern - Back in April 2009, the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) mechanism came into force providing Members with the opportunity to ask for discussions on issues where local problems have arisen and where other methods of resolution have been exhausted.

In Sunderland, two local issues have been raised through the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) mechanism and as a result of those referrals the procedure is currently be reviewed to ensure both current and future CCfAs are addressed in a timely, open and transparent way.

At the same time work is also being undertaken to develop the Scrutiny Committees' links with both the Sunderland Partnership and the Area arrangements, one of which is the signposting and escalation of local issues to the most appropriate body for resolution where appropriate.

Consideration was given to the initial proposals for the processing of non-mandatory referrals to Overview and Scrutiny through the introduction of an agreed selection criteria which also reflects / combines the CCfA mechanism at the last meeting of this Committee held on 22 October 2009. At the request of Members, further work is being undertaken to the revised process which will be brought back to this Committee for further consideration in due course.

- (c) Continued to Develop the Work of Scrutiny and the Community Leadership Role of Elected Members through a series of workshops held on 28 and 29 October 2009 facilitated by Professor Bovaird of Birmingham University, with Workshops 1, 2 and 4 being repeated over the coming months. To date the workshops have been well attended as outlined below:-

| <b>Title of Workshop / Date</b>  | <b>No. in Attendance</b> |
|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Workshop 1 - How Scrutiny can support Community Leadership Activities in Sunderland:</b><br>Wednesday 28 October 2009 – 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm<br>Tuesday 24 November 2009 – 5.00 pm to 6.30 pm | 15<br>-                  |
| <b>Workshop 2 – Delivering Effective Scrutiny:</b><br>Thursday 29 October 2009 – 5.00 pm to 8.00 pm<br>Tuesday 24 November 2009 – 10.00 am to 1.00 pm  | 6<br>-                   |
| <b>Workshop 3 – Maximising the Value of Scrutiny with Cabinet, the Council and the LSP:</b><br>Wednesday 28 October 2009 – 5.30 pm to 7.30 pm  | 18                       |
| <b>Workshop 4 – Understanding Scrutiny for Officers:</b><br>Tuesday 24 November 2009 – 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm<br>Thursday 5 February 2010 – 5.00 pm to 7.00 pm                                     | -<br>-                   |

Members are encouraged to attend the forthcoming workshops facilitated by Professor Bovaird to ensure they are successful.

- (d) Endorsed various protocols / additional information for inclusion in Overview and Scrutiny Handbook to be issued in December 2009:-
- (i) Scrutiny Chair and Vice Chair Role Descriptors
  - (ii) External Scrutiny Protocol
  - (iii) Protocol for the Appointment of Co-opted Members to the Council's Scrutiny Committees

- (iv) Information on the Regional Scrutiny Network and the Centre for Public Scrutiny; and
- (v) Information on the new Overview and Scrutiny Committee structure, introduced in May 2009.
- (vi) Councillor Call for Action Procedure (pending as currently under review)

(e) Introduced the Forward Plan as a regular agenda item to its Work Programme, to consider the forthcoming decisions of the Executive (as outlined in the Forward Plan) and to determine whether Scrutiny can add value in advance of the decision being made. Such practice has also been adopted by the six other Scrutiny Committees.

(f) Considered various corporate policies, performance and financial issues of the Council as part of our agreed work programme as summarised below:-

- (i) Regular performance reports on management of the Council's sickness absence for 2008/09 and 2009/10;
- (ii) Quarterly financial and performance monitoring reports;
- (iii) Strategy for the Disposal of Surplus Assets;
- (iv) Performance Report and Value for Money Assessment 2008/09;
- (v) On-going involvement in the City Council's budget setting process for 2010/11 Quarterly monitoring stuff

(g) Attended various conferences to maintain an awareness of scrutiny developments as summarised below:-

- (i) Enhancing Local Democracy Conference – 7 July 2009, Local Government House, London. Attendees: Councillor Tate and Wright
- (ii) North East Regional Employers Organisation's Performance Management for Members Seminar - 19 November 2009, Durham County Cricket Club, Chester-le-Street. Attendees: Councillors Tate and Wright
- (iii) Centre for Public Scrutiny's Parliamentary Seminar – 1 December 2009, House of Commons, London. Attendee – Councillor Wright

2.2 Over the coming months the Committee will continue to be heavily involved in the budget consultation process for 2010/11 along with the on-going development of the scrutiny arrangements.

2.3 In addition to the above, in my role as Chair of the Management Scrutiny Committee I continue to attend the monthly Four Way Meetings between the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and the Head of Overview and Scrutiny to discuss the development / key challenges of our scrutiny arrangements and chair the bi-monthly informal meetings of Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs.

### **3. Recommendation**

3.1 It is recommended that Members note the progress of this Scrutiny Committee.

#### **4. Background Papers**

Management Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2009/10

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