

**SCRUTINY POLICY REVIEWS 2014/15:
RESPONSE FROM CABINET – 22 JULY 2015****REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide feedback from the Cabinet meeting held on 22 July 2015, regarding scrutiny policy reviews undertaken by scrutiny in 2014/15.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Committee is responsible for considering feedback from relevant portfolio holders on Cabinet's consideration of the policy reviews undertaken by the scrutiny panels and how it intends to deliver the recommendations of each panel.
- 2.2 Cabinet considered the Final Reports on 22 June as follows:-

Scrutiny Panel	Policy Review	Responsible Portfolio Holder
City Services Scrutiny Panel	Cemetery Regulations and the Introduction of the Medical Examiner (Appendix 1)	Cllr Michael Mordey (City Services)
Children's Services Scrutiny Panel	Child Poverty (Appendix 2)	Cllr Pat Smith (Children's Services)
Skills Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel	Future Proofing Skills (Appendix 3)	Cllr Pat Smith (Children's Services)
Responsive Services and Customer Care Scrutiny Panel	Welfare Reform (Appendix 4) Operation of Food Banks in Sunderland (Appendix 5)	Cllr Cecilia Gofton (Responsive Services and Customer Care)

- 2.3 This report provides feedback from the Portfolio Holders following Cabinet's consideration of, and decisions in relation to, each of the scrutiny panels' recommendations.
- 2.4 Following the Scrutiny Committee's consideration of feedback from Cabinet on each of the Policy Reviews of 2014/15, progress towards completion of

the actions contained within each Action Plan will be monitored on an annual basis by the Committee.

3. RESPONSE FROM CABINET TO THE POLICY REVIEW

- 3.1 Following consideration of the Final Reports, Cabinet approved the recommendations in their entirety. Details of the Policy Review recommendations and proposed actions to be taken are provided in the Action Plans attached at **appendices 1 to 5**.
- 3.2 Cabinet thanked the Lead Scrutiny Members, Scrutiny Panels and its officers for undertaking the policy review and additional work.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That the Committee:-
- (a) Notes the proposed actions detailed within the Action Plans appended to this report (**Appendices 1 to 5**) and seeks clarification on content where felt appropriate; and
 - (b) Refers each of the action plans to the relevant panels for further consideration.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-
- (i) Cabinet Agenda; 22 July 2015.

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Appendix 1(a)

City Services Scrutiny Panel Review of Cemetery Regulations: Policy Review recommendations 2014/15/15

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Owner	Due Date	Progress Commentary
(a)	That a review be undertaken of the council's Cemetery Regulations. Revised regulations to be further considered and agreed by Members.	Establish contact in the Legal Section and agree terms of the regulation review. Continue to work with colleague in the Legal Section to form new regulations.	Karen Lounton	March 2016	
(b)	That the cemetery regulation review clearly outlines provisions relating to authorised and unauthorised kerb-sets in cemeteries. On completion of the review, a clear overall policy is formed in relation to unauthorised kerb-sets, which sets out the council position regarding retrospective unauthorised kerb-set as well as any future installations.	As part of the Cemetery Regulation review and in conjunction with colleagues from the Legal Section, produce a clear policy statement relating to authorised and unauthorised kerb-sets in the city's cemeteries.	Karen Lounton	March 2016	
(c)	That given the sensitivity of the issues involved in the review, a consultation plan be established involving the council website and engagement with key stakeholders.	Consultation process to commence in July 2015 where Funeral Directors, Clergy and Memorial Masons will be consulted as part of the twice yearly Bereavement Services Stakeholder meeting. E-consultation strategy to be formulated following on from this meeting.	Karen Lounton	November 2015	
(d)	That officers investigate the possibility of establishing 'friends of' groups to become actively involved with ground maintenance and local history issues at some of the older sections across the ten cemeteries in the city.	Bereavement Services to meet with Sunderland Antiquarian Society to discuss the 'friends of' group concept and establish interest.	Karen Lounton	November 2015	

Appendix 1(b)

City Services Scrutiny Panel Introduction of Medical Examiner: Policy Review recommendations 2014/15

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Owner	Due Date	Progress Commentary
(a)	That on receiving confirmation that the Medical Examiner Service is to be implemented, the council continue to work with partners to prepare for the introduction of the Medical Examiners Service.	That the Bereavement & Registration Services Manager remain aware of central government developments regarding the Medical Examiner project and take appropriate action when necessary.	Karen Lounton	March 2016	
(b)	That when implementation is confirmed, the financial implications of introducing the Medical Examiner be examined in more detail including the options for the funding of the service.	See above.	Karen Lounton	March 2016	
(c)	That consideration of future funding options takes into account the sensitive nature of the service and potential issues of affordability.	See above.	Karen Lounton	March 2016	

Appendix 2

Children's Services Scrutiny Panel Tackling Child & Family Poverty: Policy Review recommendations 2014/15

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Owner	Due Date	Progress Commentary
(a)	To develop the Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment in a way that is evidence based and is informative about local deprivation data, to encourage officers and Members to use it to inform local planning and strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare draft needs assessment using data and intelligence from a wide variety of sources • Consult with relevant partnerships to build up portfolio of best practice • Develop multi-agency Child and Family Poverty city-wide action plan 	Sandra Mitchell	31.7.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Child and Family Poverty Needs assessment in place • Consultation underway (May 2015), engaging with Children's Trust, Economic Leadership Board and Education Leadership Board
(b)	<p>Opportunities should be taken to maximise the take up of entitlements available to disadvantaged families. This includes</p> <p>i) the take up of free nursery education offered to disadvantaged two year olds and;</p> <p>ii) the number of children taking up free school meals, using an assumed consent model (thereby ensuring schools claim their full pupil premium entitlement).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review intelligence and application process to ensure all eligible families are readily identified and can easily access the offer • Review communications to ensure all eligible parents are aware of the offer and have information as to the short, medium and long term benefits • Better understand the barriers to access and support behaviour change to increase take-up 	Sandra Mitchell		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a sufficiency of places to support access 			
(c)	To explore the options for disadvantaged children to access to a nutritious meal during school holidays, where they meet the criteria for free school meals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current opportunities across localities identifying good practice and gaps in provision • Consider opportunities to link to and enhance summer activity programme for child-focussed activities e.g. library programme • Produce options paper for current and future years provision 	Sandra Mitchell		
(d)	To provide locally based parenting support services, which encourage and enable parental behaviour change where needed.		Sandra Mitchell		

Appendix 3

Skills Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel Future Proofing of Skills: Policy Review recommendations 2014/15

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Owner	Due Date	Progress Commentary
(a)	that we look at measures to improve the engagement of local businesses, the health and care sector and other public employers in primary and secondary schools, such as the work currently being delivered through the Economic Leadership Board's Work Discovery Sunderland programme.	(i) Continue to be a Key Partner in the Work Discovery Sunderland programme	ELB Business Schools Task Group	July 2016	
		(ii) Support the delivery of the Work Discovery Sector Days, focussing on key areas such as; Health and Care, Education, Software and Manufacturing	Chair(s) of ELB Business Schools Task Group (Gary Hutchinson/ Howard Kemp)	July 2016	
(b)	that the Council and its partners continue to work to raise the profile of firms operating in growth areas such as advanced manufacturing and software sectors.	(i) Identify and develop initiatives and programmes of activity to specifically address identified skills issues, encourage growth in those sectors and raise the profile of those employers	ELB Sector Growth Results Group (Tom Hurst/ Paul McEldon)	June 2016	
(c)	that the Council and its partners look at ways of raising the profile of apprenticeships and vocational training for example through highlighting local successes stories.	(i) Raise awareness of traineeships, apprenticeships and other vocational training opportunities by promoting case studies and local success stories	EdLB Participation and Engagement Group (Sandra Mitchell)	June 2016	
		(ii) Work with partners to promote engagement in the annual National Apprenticeship Week	SCC Corporate Affairs and Communications	June 2016	
		(iii) Seek external funding to implement projects that encourage employers to engage with traineeships, apprenticeship and other vocational training	ELB Sector Growth Results Group (Tom Hurst/Paul McEldon)	June 2016	

(d)	that further work be undertaken to look at measures to increase the interest of females in areas such as advanced engineering, software and information technology.	(i) Where appropriate develop sector specific initiatives targeted at females and improve gender imbalance in those sectors	ELB Sector Growth Results Group (Tom Hurst/Paul McEldon)	June 2016	
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Appendix 4

Responsive Services and Customer Care Scrutiny Panel Welfare Reform: Policy Review recommendations 2014/15

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Owner	Due Date	Progress Commentary
(a)	That the Council continues to work with its partners and other agencies to help to mitigate the impact and hardship resulting from welfare reform on the people of the city	Council undertaking review of its current Welfare Reform Board remit, work streams and membership. Work streams will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit Implementation Plan (covering Digital inclusion/ Financial inclusion) • Welfare Reform Impact analysis • Communications 	Strategic Change Manager, PSD	End June 2015	
		Review and improve information advice and guidance available – including web offer and other support materials inc improved service directory	Strategic Change Manager, PSD	End June 2015 - then on-going (review March 2016)	
		Look at options for disadvantaged children who qualify for FSM to access to a nutritious meal during school holidays	Head of Community & Family Well-being, PSD	End September 2015	
		Council reviewing its existing DHP scheme to build in 'move on' advice and information from this temporary support	Strategic Change Manager, PSD	End December 2015	
(b)	That the Council continues to work with Jobcentre Plus in order to improve the clarity of information	On-going liaison with Job Centre Plus within UC Implementation Plan and separately	Strategic Change Manager, PSD	On-going – Review March	

	provide to claimants, particularly to prevent the unnecessary application of sanctions		Job Centre Plus	2016	
		Monitoring of sanctions / reasons for sanctions (across JSA,ESA and UC)	Strategic Change Manager, PSD Intelligence Hub	On-going – Review March 2016	
		Development of Public Information-jointly with JCP and or by the council to better inform customer	Strategic Change Manager, PSD Communications Team / Job Centre Plus	On-going – Review March 2016	
(c)	That the Council and its partners continue to prepare for the introduction of Universal Credit across the city and monitor its effect on the pilot areas	Universal Credit Implementation Plan developed by council – including digital and financial inclusion mapping and initiatives – and taking account of information from pilot sites in other council areas	Strategic Change Manager, PSD	End June 2015	
		On-going activity linked to Making your Money Go Further Campaign	Strategic Change Manager, PSD Comms	On-going – Review March 2016	
		Production and agreement of JCP Universal Credit Implementation Plan (expected 16 weeks before UC go live date	BIAS/ CSC /, Job Centre Plus	Expected by September 2015	
(d)	That the Panel expressed its support for the continuation of the Council Tax Support at its current level during 2015/16	No actions required at this stage			
(e)	That the Panel supports the content and eligibility criteria suggested for the amended Crisis and Community Care Support schemes as set out in the report	No actions required at this stage			

Appendix 5

Responsive Services and Customer Care Scrutiny Panel Food Banks: Policy Review recommendations 2014/15

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Owner	Due Date	Progress Commentary
(a)	That the Council looks into the practicalities of offering to purchase freezers for those food banks who express an interest	Complete scoping exercise -demand and potential cost- and any information that might be required from providers as condition of receiving items	Strategic Change Manager, PSD	End June 2015	
		Complete Procurement exercise (if items are required)	Strategic Change Manager, PSD Procurement	September 2015	
		Monitor effectiveness and impact of solution (if items are required)	Strategic Change Manager, PSD FBN	September 2015 onwards	
(b)	That the Council work with the Network to help to broker discussions with those supermarkets who provide surplus food on ways of providing transport for delivery	Identify the issues and meet with main supermarkets to test the 'appetite for them to support a working solution	Strategic Change Manager, PSD FBN	By December 2015	
(c)	That more research be undertaken into the number and location of food banks, luncheon clubs and subsidised food outlets in the city	Research undertaken by member in conjunction with appropriate parties	Strategic Change Manager, PSD FBN	End September 2015	
		Information published via service directory			

(d)	That joint working continue with Job Centre Plus to make claimants more aware of the operation of welfare benefit sanctions, short term benefit advances and the existence of emergency payments	On-going liaison with Job Centre Plus within UC Implementation Plan and separately	Strategic Change Manager, PSD Job Centre Plus	On-going – Review March 2016	
		Monitoring of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sanctions / reasons for sanctions (across JSA,ESA and UC) Information provided by JCP to customers on sanctions and short term emergency / advance payments 	Strategic Change Manager, PSD Intelligence Hub	On-going – Review March 2016	
		Development of Public Information-jointly with JCP and/ or by the council to better inform customer	Strategic Change Manager, PSD Communications Team /Job Centre Plus	End December 2015	
(e)	That the Council works with the Network to help to dispel myths surrounding use of food banks	Range of activity to identified and covered as part of Welfare Reform Communications / wider communications activity by council and partners	Communications Team /Job Centre Plus Communications Team	On-going – Review March 2016	