

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Report of the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee**

#### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To approve the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee report as part of the overall scrutiny annual report 2010/11 that is to be presented to Council in June.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 In line with last years arrangements, the annual report will be a single combined report of all seven scrutiny committees. The annual report will outline the developments in the scrutiny function and provide snapshots of the outcomes achieved during the last 12 months.

#### **3. Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee 2010/11**

- 3.1 The proposed Community and Safer City report is attached at **appendix 1** for members consideration. The report provides a very brief snapshot of the some of the main work undertaken by the committee during 2010/11. It should be noted that the report is written from the perspective of the Chair of the Committee reflecting over the year.
- 3.2 Some of the main themes covered in the annual report revolve around the following issues:
- Policy Review: Alcohol, Violence and the Night Time Economy
  - Implications of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill
  - Licensing Policy and Enforcement
  - Poverty of Place

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The Committee has delivered another successful work programme in 2010/11, which is reflected in the annual report. The Scrutiny Committee has worked well with Council Directorates, stakeholders and partner organisations to deliver the work programme. The Scrutiny Committee has tackled a number of key issues throughout the year and looked to work with officers and stakeholders to provide solutions and improvements to services delivered across the city.

**5. Recommendation**

- 5.1 That Members approve the Community and Safer City Scrutiny report 2010/11 for inclusion in the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11.

**6. Background Papers**

- 6.1 2010/11 Agendas

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**Contact Officer:** Claire Harrison, Acting Scrutiny Officer, 561 1232  
[Claire.harrison1@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.harrison1@sunderland.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX 1: ANNUAL REPORT

### Annual Report: Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee 2010/11

City Centre nightclubs at 1 o'clock in the morning... perhaps not somewhere you would expect to see the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee, but this year the Committee have been active in the community, collecting evidence for their policy review; Alcohol, Violence and the Night Time Economy.

We've all heard the phrases binge drinking and alcohol fuelled violence in the National Press and it comes as no surprise that a number of alcohol-related violent incidents occur in City Centres across Britain. When deciding the work programme for the year, the Committee felt this issue warranted scrutiny at a local level. The Committee have investigated the work of the Council and Partner Organisations to ensure that Sunderland's City Centre continues to be a safe place to enjoy a night out.

Alongside the City Centre visits with the Police and the Street Pastors, the Committee have received evidence from a wide range of organisations including: The Home Office, Victim Support, Northumbria Probation Service, NHS South of Tyne, Northumbria Police, City Hospitals Sunderland and Balance. These organisations have made significant contributions to the evidence gathering process. Council officers have also outlined some of the vital work that is underway to ensure a safe City Centre and we have considered best practice from other areas to assess whether we can be doing anything more.

Licensing policy and enforcement action was an area that the Committee considered to be important in maintaining a safe drinking environment and ensuring violent incidents were at a minimum. Therefore a task and finish group was set up to investigate this issue in depth. This involved speaking to the police and council officers as well as the Chair of Pubwatch. Members recognised the importance of hearing the views of Licensees and completed a consultation to establish what they felt were the main issues in maintaining a safe city centre.

Our work has reflected national priorities and the Committee have given careful consideration to the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill. This Bill was introduced with the aim of improving democratic accountability and tackling alcohol related violence. The Committee have contributed to the Council responses to the consultation process, following detailed consideration of the issues in question. Members also met with Sunderland MP Bridget Phillipson. Her detailed knowledge of the Bill and relevant issues was an invaluable part of the evidence gathering process.

The Committee are confident that the recommendations in the final report will lead to improved outcomes for residents of Sunderland by encouraging greater information sharing across organisations, strengthening of

preventative schemes and promoting a proactive approach to recent policy changes.

At the beginning of the year the Committee considered the impact of poverty of place and they have visited a number of locations in the City to observe where poverty of place is evident and what work is being undertaken to address this. As this is a cross cutting issues members of the Environment and Attractive and Sustainable Scrutiny Committees also attended this visit.

Members are proud to say that this has been another year of successful Scrutiny and partnership working has certainly been key in this success. The Committee are pleased with how all agencies have worked together in the City and believe that this is vital in maintaining a safe city which all residents are proud of. We look forward to another successful year of Scrutiny.

**Cllr Robert Heron**  
**Chair of the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee**