

LEAD SCRUTINY MEMBER UPDATE: JULY 2015

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. LEAD SCRUTINY MEMBER UPDATE

***Scrutiny Chair and Vice Chair (Cllrs Norma Wright and Dianne Snowdon)***

- 2.1 The Council's Constitution states that full Council must receive a report, annually, on the workings of overview and scrutiny. As a result the Scrutiny Annual Report was presented to Full Council on Wednesday 24 June 2015, by Cllr Norma Wright, and provided an overview of the previous years work as well as looking ahead to 2015/16.

- 2.2 The Chair is also to lead a review of the current scrutiny function in Sunderland and the first informal meeting of the scrutiny committee will have taken place on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2015. The main purpose of this meeting was to outline the scope, remit and provide a framework for completion of the review.

- 2.3 The Safeguarding Working Group has met on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015, following a brief hiatus through local elections and the Ofsted inspection. The membership of the working group has also changed as a result of the elections and now comprises Cllr N Wright, Cllr J Fletcher, Cllr D Snowdon, Cllr D Dixon and S Williamson. The scrutiny committee will be kept apprised of all activities of the working group.

Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee

- 2.4 The NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 22<sup>nd</sup> June in Durham. The meeting included an overview of the key priorities of the LEP presented by the interim Chief Executive as well as an overview of funding through the LEP.

- 2.5 The Committee also discussed the remit of a policy review of transport related barriers to employment, education and training.

NE Regional Scrutiny Network

- 2.6 The Network met on 3<sup>rd</sup> July in Durham. The main item on the agenda was scrutiny's role in children's safeguarding. A senior officer from Ofsted highlighted examples of best practice, areas of potential focus for scrutiny and the potential for greater links with scrutiny. The CfPS provided the Network with a guide to scrutinising children's safeguarding.

- 2.7 In addition, the Network discussed how proposals for devolution may impact on scrutiny arrangements and the future role of local government scrutiny.

### ***Children's Services (Cllr Darryl Dixon)***

- 2.8 The Panel met on 13<sup>th</sup> June to discuss topics for the year ahead following the Annual Scrutiny Debate. The discussion at the Debate concluded that SEND (SEN and disabilities) Local Offer – One Year On may be the most useful topic. From September 2014 the Council published a 'Local Offer' which set out what is available for children and young people with SEN and disabilities.

A scrutiny review could :

- Evaluate the process by which the Local Offer has been developed;
- Evaluate the level of engagement from partners, young people and their families, schools and other agencies;
- Evaluate what has been included in the Offer and where there are any gaps.

### ***City Services (Cllr Lynda Scanlan)***

- 2.9 The Panel met on 7 July 2015 in order to discuss the main issues that it wishes to address in the year ahead.
- 2.10 It was suggested that the Panel conduct a review into the way in which street licences can support a vibrant city. Such a review could examine the way in which the policies and processes surrounding the granting of street licences can help to support the aim of a more vibrant city centre and also the potential for bringing greater flexibility to the process. The review could also help to identify any zones/areas within the city that could most benefit. The review would provide an opportunity to discuss these issues with a range of partners such as local traders and the BID.
- 2.11 The Panel also felt it would be useful to look at the general issue of enforcement and the extent to which enforcement powers available to the Council across a range of areas are being used. This would involve consideration of the correct balance which should exist between persuasion, education and enforcement.
- 2.12 It was also suggested that the Panel could receive a report on the issue of road surface patching. This could consider the potential long term solutions available to help reduce the Council's liability from accident claims. Members suggested that this issue could be best considered through an update report to the Panel if time allows.

### ***Health, Housing and Adult Services (Cllr Jill Fletcher)***

- 2.13 The Panel met on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015 to discuss the key issues arising from the discussions held at the recent scrutiny annual debate.
- 2.14 The panel agreed to look at the issue of transition from children to adult social care, the approaches taken, how these vulnerable children are supported into adulthood and independent living, where does the system fail or create gaps, what new sustainable approaches can be taken and what common themes or denominators exist in transition.
- 2.15 The panel will also look at, as a one-off topic, the scale of Houses of Multiple Occupation proliferation in relevant areas. The panel felt that this was an interesting topic but was not sufficient for a major review and therefore will hold a meeting to gain an overview of the issue and the progress the local authority is making in tackling the issues.

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

- 2.16 The Panel met at the Annual Scrutiny debate on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and discussed a variety of topics including NHS Health Checks, Self-Harm, Sexual Health, Culture and Falls prevention. A further subject topic was proposed after the debate on the Culture of Wellness from new panel member, Cllr G Walker.
- 2.17 At the first panel meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015, a discussion was held around Sexual health, self-harm and the culture of wellness. The panel are keen to look at self-harm as the spotlight review topic, specifically in relation to 'immediate' self-harm; examples of this include cutting, burning and poisoning. Sexual Health was requested as a secondary shorter topic specifically around sexually transmitted diseases and prevention and a visit to the Genito Urinary Medicine clinic was suggested. Enquiries were made into the culture of wellness and as there is work on-going in this area, this was suggested as an update report to a further panel meeting.

***Skills, Economy and Regeneration (Cllr David Snowdon)***

- 2.18 At the Annual Scrutiny debate on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015 the Panel considered a variety of topics which included; Key Cities, The Work Programme, Digital Skills and apprenticeships and agreed to prioritise Key Cities and The Work Programme as preferred topics to be discussed at the first meeting of the full Panel in July.
- 2.19 The first meeting was held on July 2 and Andrew Perkin, Lead Policy Officer for Economy & Sustainability and Stephanie Rose, Associate Policy Lead for Culture , Sport & Learning attended.
- 2.20 There was a brief discussion around how the Key Cities review could be structured including research of all 26 Key Cities, analysis of best practice and most appropriate to Sunderland's needs and conclusions and learning to take forward. The general feeling was that Sunderland had a number of new and exciting initiatives happening and that this was an ideal time to look at how we can learn from others and best use the Key Cities Network.
- 2.21 For the secondary topic a discussion took place about how accessible data was in order to look at the performance of the Work Programme. It seems that local data is not made available and the national data is only produced with a 6 months lag. An alternative focus was suggested looking at the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) and the skills that would be needed to ensure local people are able to meet the requirements. Concerns were raised about whether or not this came under the Skills remit and Cllr Snowdon agreed to discuss this with other Lead Members.
- 2.22 The panel collectively agreed that a recommendation to the Scrutiny Committee would be as follows in relation to topics suggested:

Main Topic: Key Cities – Learning from others to maximise the effectiveness of Sunderland's Regeneration

Secondary topic subject to discussion: Universal Credit – particularly looking at meeting the digital skills needed under this new system.

### ***Responsive Services and Customer Care (Cllr Ronny Davison)***

- 2.23 On 2nd July 2015, the Panel met discuss its priority topics for the year ahead and the issues raised during the Scrutiny Debate.
- 2.24 As its priority topic for the year, Members agreed to focus on the issue of Customer Care. It was suggested that the review could examine what customer services has achieved to date, how the council makes use of customer satisfaction data and the way we use information to improve services.
- 2.25 Building on the work of last year, the Panel asked to receive a progress report on the implementation of the new powers contained in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act and the way in which it is impacting on the work of the Council and its partners.
- 2.26 Also, following on from last year's review into welfare reform, it was suggested that later in the year the Panel could receive an update report on the implementation of Universal Credit. This could consider the progress being made by the Council and its partners in preparing for the introduction of Universal Credit in the city.

### **3. CURRENT 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 A complete membership of the Scrutiny Panels is attached for information at **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 1 July 2014 the breakdown of the budget stood as follows:-

Description	£
Scrutiny Development	£2,341.85
Member Development	£898
Policy Review Development	£0.00
<b>Total Expenditure to Date</b>	<b>£3,239.85</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>£15,000</b>
<b>Remaining Budget</b>	<b>£11,760.15</b>

## **5. ANNUAL SCRUTINY DEBATE 2014 - EVALUATION OF FEEDBACK FROM DELEGATES**

- 5.1 The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Scrutiny Debate was held on 17<sup>th</sup> June at the Quayside Exchange in Sunderland.
- 5.2 There were 83 delegates at the event including 43 elected members.
- 5.3 Overall the majority of those who responded rated the event as excellent or good. Delegates particularly valued the workshop discussions and the opportunity to network with others. One delegate commented that it was a 'very open discussion focusing on what difference scrutiny could make to the different topics'.
- 5.4 90% of delegates rated the speakers as either excellent or good.
- 5.5 The following aspects were given as suggested areas of improvement:
- A need to focus on issues rather than portfolio
  - Debate topics circulated prior to meeting to all delegates
  - Try a different venue

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee;
- (a) notes and considers the update of the Lead Scrutiny Members and receives a further verbal update at the meeting;
  - (b) notes the current expenditure and remaining scrutiny budget for 2014/15, and
  - (c) notes and considers the Scrutiny Debate evaluation feedback from delegates.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Scrutiny Committee Agenda and Papers – 26 June

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## MEMBERSHIP OF THE SIX SCRUTINY PANELS

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>City Services</b></p> <p>Lead Scrutiny Member: <b>Cllr Lynda Scanlan</b></p> <p>Cllr James Blackburn Cllr Michael Essl Cllr Stuart Porthouse Cllr Steven Foster Cllr Margaret Beck Cllr Bernie Scaplehorn Cllr Peter Wood</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Health, Housing &amp; Adult Services</b></p> <p>Lead Scrutiny Member: <b>Cllr Jill Fletcher</b></p> <p>Cllr Alan Emerson Cllr Rosalind Copeland Cllr Michael Dixon Cllr Shirley Leadbitter Cllr Barbara McLennan Cllr Dorothy Trueman Cllr Paul Middleton Cllr Juliana Heron Cllr Doris Turner</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Children's Services</b></p> <p>Lead Scrutiny Member: <b>Cllr Darryl Dixon</b></p> <p>Cllr Debra Waller Cllr Doris MacKnight Cllr Anthony Farr Cllr Philip Tye Cllr Jacqui Gallagher Cllr Bob Francis Cllr Karen Waters Cllr Victoria O'Neil</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Skills, Economy &amp; Regeneration</b></p> <p>Lead Scrutiny Member: <b>Cllr David Snowdon</b></p> <p>Cllr Bob Price Cllr Michael Dixon Cllr Christine Marshall Cllr Mary Turton Cllr Billy Turton Cllr Len Lauchlan Cllr Colin English Cllr Miles Elliot</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Public Health, Wellness &amp; Culture</b></p> <p>Lead Scrutiny Member: <b>Cllr George Howe</b></p> <p>Cllr Louise Farthing Cllr Fiona Miller Cllr Julia Jackson Cllr Rebecca Atkinson Cllr Richard Bell Cllr John Cummings Cllr Shirley Leadbitter Cllr Geoff Walker</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Responsive Services &amp; Customer Care</b></p> <p>Lead Scrutiny Member: <b>Cllr Ronny Davison</b></p> <p>Cllr Betty Gibson Cllr Barry Curran Cllr Iain Kay Cllr Gillian Galbraith Cllr Margaret Forbes Cllr Ian Galbraith Cllr Tony Taylor</p>