

## ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To determine the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme for 2015/16, including the selection of policy reviews to be undertaken by the Lead Scrutiny Members and their supporting Panels.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As Members are aware, a new scrutiny operating commissioning model was introduced in 2012/13. Within this model, the Scrutiny Committee acts as the overarching Committee with responsibility for all matters in relation to the improvement, delivery and performance of the scrutiny function.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Committee will agree its annual work programme which allows overview and scrutiny responsibilities to be exercised in an effective manner, including the establishment of scrutiny panels led by a Lead Scrutiny Member to champion scrutiny within their remit and examine in-depth priority issues. It will also act as the designated Scrutiny Committee for statutory purposes for both health and crime and disorder scrutiny, and where relevant statutory flood and coastal erosion scrutiny.

#### 3. DETERMINING THE ANNUAL SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

- 3.1 Topics for inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme will vary from single issue items for consideration such as quarterly performance / budget monitoring reports, the Council's budget and policy framework documents (known as Article 4 Plans) and Lead Scrutiny Member feedback to more detailed investigatory work through the undertaking of focused policy reviews.
- 3.2 The table below summarises the relevant single item issues which are likely to be a regular feature of the Scrutiny work programme for 2015/16.

Regular Work Programme Items	
Budget Monitoring (Quarterly)	To consider quarterly budget monitoring reports of the Council. Look at progress on the Council's financial position in relation to the budgetary savings to be made.
Scrutiny Lead Member progress reports (Monthly)	To receive regular progress reports from individual Scrutiny Lead Members detailing the progress, issues and achievements of their relevant Scrutiny Panels.
28 Day Notice of Key Decisions (Monthly)	To consider the Council's 28 Day Notice of Key Decisions which contains matters

	which are likely to be the subject of a key decision to be taken by the executive, a committee of the executive, individual members of the executive, officers, area committees or under joint arrangements in the course of the discharge of an executive function during the period covered by the plan.
<b>Single Item (Items to be scheduled when dates known)</b>	
Continued development of the Council's Scrutiny Function	To co-ordinate the on-going development / effectiveness of the Council's Scrutiny Function
The Council's Budget Setting Process for 2016/17 ( <i>October 2015 onwards</i> )	In-depth involvement in the Council's budget setting process for 2016/17
Substantial Variations to Health Services	Substantial variations to health services will be presented to the Committee as such issues emerge.

3.3 A draft Scrutiny Work Programme for 2015/16 is attached as **Appendix 1**, which incorporates, where relevant the items above.

3.4 It should be noted that the work programme is a 'living' document and can be amended throughout the course of the municipal year. Any Elected Member can add an item of business to an agenda for consideration (Protocol 1 within the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook outlines this process).

#### **4. Scrutiny Policy Reviews**

4.1 The undertaking of scrutiny policy reviews allows the opportunity within an agreed period of time to examine the Council and its partners' policies and determine whether the Council and / or the relevant public service provider(s) intended policy outcomes have been achieved. The process also considers the views of all key stakeholders involved from their own perspective.

4.2 The policy reviews are project planned with appropriate methodology applied to investigate the chosen topic. This may include meetings, site visits, surveys, commissioning of research, public meetings or analysis of comparative practice in other local authorities.

4.3 Within the revised scrutiny arrangements, the Scrutiny Committee does not undertake a policy review of its own. Instead the Committee commissions the Lead Scrutiny Members and their respective scrutiny panels to undertake focused policy reviews during 2015/16.

4.4 The recently successful Annual Scrutiny Debate allowed Members, officers and partners to discuss a variety of scrutiny topics and to gather a list of potential issues for review during the coming year. Each Lead Member and supporting Scrutiny Panel has yet to convene to discuss the topics from the Debate and agreed its priorities and some indicative timescales for completion.

- 4.5 The list of potential topics for each of the Lead Scrutiny Members is attached as **Appendix 2**. It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee commissions each Lead Member to undertake a minimum of one policy review for 2015/16. The Committee should also note that the Annual Scrutiny Debate will have taken place on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June, where discussions will have taken place around the various scrutiny topics. Lead Scrutiny Members will provide an update to the committee in relation to these discussions and final policy topics will be presented to the July meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, following the initial round of panel meetings.
- 4.6 Following the Scrutiny Committee's consideration and endorsement of the policy review topics, further reports will be provided to the scrutiny panels which will include detailed terms of reference, definitions, links to corporate outcomes, partnerships, the national and local context, and proposals for gathering evidence. The Scrutiny Committee will receive ongoing updates from Lead Scrutiny Members through the monthly Lead Scrutiny Member Update. Any suggested deviations, amendments or additions to the work of the Scrutiny Panel's will be brought to the Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

## **6. Recommendations**

### **6.1 That the Scrutiny Committee:-**

- (a) Agrees the draft Annual Scrutiny Work Programme for 2015/16 and incorporates emerging issues as and when they arise throughout the forthcoming year;
- (b) Considers the list of potential policy review topics and notes any updates from Lead Scrutiny Members following the Scrutiny Annual Debate; and
- (c) Receives regular updates on the progress of the work of the Lead Scrutiny Member and the supporting Panels through the Lead Scrutiny Member Update mechanism.

## **7. Background Papers**

### **7.1 Scrutiny Panel notes – June 2014**

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## APPENDIX 1: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

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## APPENDIX 2: Potential Policy Review Topics 2015-16

### CHILDRENS SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

- (a) ***A review of children's services*** - It is proposed that a review would consider accountability and governance arrangements to ensure that the wider multi-agency arrangements for the provision of services to children and their families are routinely considered by elected members.
- (b) ***To what extent are Sunderland children getting the best start in life?*** - Examine the extent to which our city is a place where our children and young people have the best start in life, building resilience to take control for safe, healthy and fulfilling lives and to reach their full potential. This would fulfil our ambition is to create an environment where children can flourish, and ensure high quality services and provision that focus on driving excellent outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- (c) ***School Holiday Food and Activity Provision*** - There are approximately 170 non-school days in the year that Free School Meal (FSM) pupils cannot access their entitlement to a school lunch, which is often the only regular hot meal that is available to them during the week. Provision and access to quality food fit for children's needs for a balanced diet when no FSM are available is a problem for the most vulnerable families. A review could examine the options for families, linked to existing activity provision in school holidays.
- (d) ***SENd Local Offer – One Year On*** - 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 SCRUTINY PANEL

- (a) ***First Impressions of the City*** - A review could include:
  - The appearance of gateways to the City (roads and rail)
  - What people think about Sunderland as a place to shop, visit, do business and study matters
  - How this impacts on the city's future prosperity
  - What is the ability to improve the 'offer'

How do we attract visitors, developers, new businesses and shoppers, as part of wider efforts to regenerate the city?

(b) ***How street licences can support a vibrant city***

(c) ***Pest Control*** - A review could consider :

how council service teams work together to contain and reduce the pest problem

how the council works with our external partners to eradicate the pest problem.

(d) ***Enforcement of dog fouling*** - We know that most dog owners are responsible and clear up after their dog. However, where dog owners act irresponsibly and allow their dogs to contaminate the street or open areas of grass, this can pose a health hazard. A review could investigate dog fouling and also the range of dog control and enforcement duties of the Council.

(e) ***Road Surface Patching*** - A review could consider long term solutions to reduce the Councils potential liability from accident claims using systems that produce a finish that is enduring.

(f) ***The future of tethered horse management*** - A review would provide Members with the opportunity to consider how the Council will deal with the management of tethered horses in the future. In doing so they can reflect on current practice and discuss potential future options.

## HEALTH HOUSING AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

(a) ***Accommodation for Vulnerable People*** - A review could consider:

Current approaches and how needs are met

The implications of reduced financial resources on future options and future delivery.

Outcomes could include – meeting future needs and the accommodation options available. A review will help inform the review of our Homelessness Strategy which will be on-going through this year.

(b) ***Transition from children to adult social care*** - A scrutiny review could include three cross-cutting themes:

Support at the point of becoming an adult and achieving independence

Changes in the actual services used

Explicit duties in relation to the Care Act 2014 and the Children & Families Act 2014.

(c) ***How effective is the Council's Article 4 Direction in enabling the Council to control and manage the scale of HMO***

***proliferation in the relevant areas?*** - The definition of a House in Multiple Occupation, or HMO, is a property occupied by three or more people who do not form a single household, and who share facilities in the home.

Where they are prevalent, they can create problems within the immediate neighbourhood that result in a change in the community covering issues of noise, antisocial behaviour, litter, uncared for properties and uncommunicative landlords or agents.

The review would aim to :

Understand how the private rented sector market operates, specifically the HMO sub sector.

Investigate the positive and negative impacts of HMOs.

Review the Council's approach to dealing with HMOs.

Identify ways in which community cohesion can be encouraged in areas with high levels of HMOs.

- (d) ***Support for Vulnerable People Employing Personal Assistants*** - Personalisation and direct payments offer an opportunity for people to make decisions about their own care and what best suits their needs. It also presents an opportunity for people to be cared for by friends, relatives or by choosing to employ agency staff. For many people it provides an independence they might not otherwise have had. However, with increased independence comes increased risk and we have to be sure that the Council's safeguarding procedures are as effective as possible and that detailed monitoring and auditing of expenditure is undertaken to ensure that proper procedures are followed.

Outcomes of a review would be to aim to make it easier for people with disabilities to employ PAs to help them to live as full a life as possible.

- (e) ***Assessment of readiness for Self-Care*** - The increasing number of people living with long term conditions presents a major challenge for health, social care, community and voluntary sector partners. Better awareness of their long term conditions helps people understand their symptoms and experiences and improves their long term health and wellbeing. The role of the care professional is to encourage self-confidence and the capacity for self- management and to support people to have more control of their conditions and their lives.

The review could consider what is involved in self-care, does the community understand what is required and the benefits, and is there capacity for it?

## PUBLIC HEALTH, WELLNESS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY PANEL

- (a) **Sexual Health Services** - A review could consider prevention of sexually transmitted infections and re-infection and conceptions amongst teenagers.
- (b) **Self-harm** - To establish the levels, treatment and preventative work with regards to self-harm in Sunderland. A review could:
  - Identify how many young people and adults self-harm, and to establish are these figures a true reflection.
  - Investigate what services / systems are currently in place to identify these people.
  - Ensure that the correct support and help for people is in place and that this is working effectively.
  - To establish what preventative work is being undertaken by the Council and its partners.
- (c) **Falls prevention** - National statistics show that falls account for 40% of non-fatal injuries and 46% of all deaths. In fact, falls are the biggest cause of accidental death in the UK, beating both road accidents and fires. This is particularly an issue for older people with a third of those over 65 falling at least once a year. Most deaths from falls involve the older age groups with nearly 80% of the victims aged over 65. As well as having an impact on people's quality of life and in particular their independence, there are also costs to the health service. For example, if that fall results in a hip fracture.

A review could help in determining ways to raise awareness of personal safety in and outside the home to help reduce the risk of falls and to identify ways of communicating effectively with older people.
- (d) **NHS Health Checks** - Local Authorities have the responsibility for commissioning NHS Health Checks and are required to seek a continuous improvement in the percentage of eligible individuals taking up their offer of a NHS Health Check. The higher the take-up rates for the programme, the greater its reach and impact and the more likely the programme is to tackle health inequalities.

A scrutiny review could understand the levels of take up in the local area and suggest improvements including the return on investment.



## RESPONSIVE SERVICES AND CUSTOMER CARE SCRUTINY PANEL

- (a) **Debt Collection** - A review could consider looking at the process of collecting money and whether it is as efficient as possible; does the council take proper regard of its social responsibilities in exercising this function? do we know the level of debt of our citizens and do all parts of the city have access to debt counselling and reputable debt consolidation activity?
- (b) **Impact of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – one year on** - The Government is bringing in new tools and powers around anti-social behaviour will require the Council and partner agencies to work differently. Scrutiny will be able to consider the new powers and influence thinking on the best ways to communicate and implement them.

A review will allow Scrutiny members and partner agencies to come together to discuss the city's approach to tackling ASB and agree recommendations as to how the new powers are delivered most effectively.

- (c) **The local impacts of the introduction of Universal Credit** - A scrutiny review could consider the developments that have taken place in relation to benefit system changes and the introduction of Universal Credit. The review could also consider the impact of the changes and the support and advice that is available to residents.
- (d) **Customer Services** - This review will present an opportunity to find out 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.
- (e) **Community Integration** - A review could consider the strategies in place to tackle specific crime types that adversely affect community integration. This could include investigating local challenges such as social media which exacerbate community tensions amongst certain sectors of the community. It could also follow up on a focused piece of work carried out by the Panel during 2014 on reporting mechanisms for hate crime which looked at the setting up of an intelligence-led information system.

## SKILLS ECONOMY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL

- (a) **What have we learnt from Key Cities around connectivity, city centres and skills matching?** - The review could assist with understanding the economic, infrastructure and labour market links between cities and within the cities themselves, and to match city specific policy interventions with a wider suite of policies designed to facilitate inter-city connectivity.
- (b) **Department of Work and Pensions' (DWP) – the Work Programme** - The review could consider the performance of the Work Programme since its inception in June 2011, including the latest data available, and comparing the performance of the

contractors with national results. Since the previous scrutiny panel report on the Delivery of the Work Programme (2013), the DWP has published the third set of performance data. The review could also consider the relationship between JCP and Work Programme providers and the role of WP providers in making sanctions referrals including the extent to which people have the skills to help achieve successful work placements.

- (c) **Employability Skills** - A review could look at young people's transition from education to employment. This could involve how we ensure that education and training equips young people with the skills that businesses and employers need. It could also examine how to bring education and business together to ensure that learning provision matches local industry need. The quality of careers advice will also play a key role in achieving this.
- (d) **Digital Skills** - A review could look at the skills development of residents and how local people are being supported to gain the digital skills relevant to a modern labour market. Digital skills can be framed widely including school age, post-16, higher education providers as well as amongst job seekers, for example, do they have the skills to cope with the commitment required for online job seeking. What is needed in terms of short term issues around labour market demand and for long term strategies to prepare a new generation?